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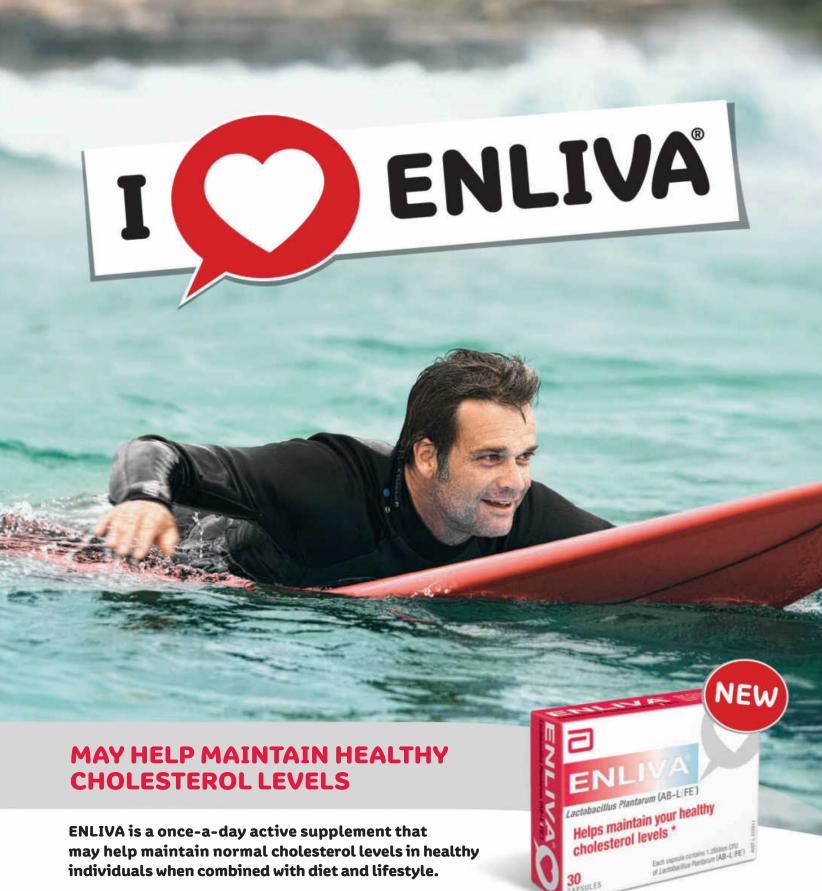


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Michael Davis, Editor

Media Torpedo Amateur Flagship

THE MAINSTREAM MEDIA in this country have all but ignored the Australian Amateur Championships yet again.

Instead they preferred endless boring tennis matches, cricket until it made our noses bleed and tales about half-witted footballers embarrassing themselves in lewd poses on social media.

If the boffins heading the mainstream outlets had chosen to pay the flagship amateur event in this country the respect it deserves, they would have been the richer for it.

But the media lost interest once 17-year-old Ryan Ruffels revealed on the eve of the championship he was turning professional and heading to the US.

If they had hung around, they would have unearthed a myriad of good yarns about the best young male and female golfers in the world. In our view they let a golden opportunity slip through their fingers.

The lack of decent coverage reflects poorly on the sports editors and chiefs of staff around the country. Compare the attention the AFL Draft Camp receives even though many taking part will never darken the door of an AFL club.

Great players like Jason Day, Adam Scott, Marc Leishman and many others forged their ultimately successful professional careers in events like the Australian Amateur Championship.

Just a few years ago, a freshfaced Brisbane kid, Cameron Smith, lifted the national title. He finished tied fourth in the US Open at Chambers Bay last year.

It has long been a lament of ours that the mainstream media has sent amateur golf in this county to Coventry.

They need to take a leaf out of the US playbook, where the amateur scene receives superb coverage across all media.

For the record, Scotland's Connor Syme was crowned the men's



The lack of decent coverage reflects poorly on the sports editors and chiefs of staff around the country.

champion while 18-year-old Korean Min-ji Park claimed the women's title. Both won spots in the Australian Open with their victories.

Syme, a rising star from Fyfe, said he could not wait to get back to Australia for this year's Emirates Australian Open after seeing off Sydney's Travis Smyth 3&2 in an epic 34-hole final.

Park played exemplary golf, beating compatriot Ayean Cho 6&5 in a high standard final. She made 10 birdies in 31 holes for an unofficial score of eight-under that was just too much for Cho.

So deep is the Korean golf talent pool that Park, in her first national squad appearance, wasn't in the four players nominated to play for the Ross Herbert International Team Trophy.

The win also came in Park's first trip overseas.

Her biggest reward was almost immediate – a start in the ISPS Handa Australian Open at The Grange in Adelaide.

So yet again two fine young players appear on the horizon and we shall follow their careers with interest. Just don't rely on the Australian mainstream media for coverage.

Michael Davis



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Now on the Tee: Your Raves, Rants and Reactions







SPIETH-TACULAR!

Decongratulations on naming Jordan Spieth GOLF's Player of the Year. He proved himself to be the best player in 2015 with his accomplishments on the course. However, I think Jordan showed his true greatness when, after missing the chance to win his third straight major, he came out of the St. Andrews clubhouse and stood with the gallery to watch the British Open playoff. His sportsmanship should be a lesson not only to golfers but to everyone playing professional and amateur sports.

—DANIEL WEHRLE, VIA E-MAIL

Your January cover photo of Jordan Spieth is a masterpiece. It captures his incredible determination, focus, and inner strength, as well as the ego-free nature of his character. Spieth is an exceptional man because he exudes a spirit of generosity and selfless personal engagement with others—rare among golf's elite. Congrats on a brilliant photo and an all-around worthy selection.

—BILL DAY, VIA E-MAIL



KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE HOLE

DI read with interest your "Watch the Birdie" article (January 2016), which described Jordan Spieth's method of looking at the hole on short putts as "strokesaving." I also read with interest the "Tee to Green: All World" graph in the preceding article ("\$22,030,465 (and counting)"), which showed that Spieth is well below the Tour average on short putts of three to five feet. So instead of wondering if he could be more dominant by looking at the hole on long putts, maybe the question should be, could he be even more dominant if he looked at the ball on the short ones?

—DICK WILLIAMS, VIA E-MAIL

I STARTED PUTTING WHILE LOOKING AT THE HOLE AFTER Watching raymond floyd do it over 30 years ago. It Definitely helps with nerves on the short ones.

—EDDIE TISON, VIA E-MAIL

I found your article about Jordan Spieth's putting technique quite interesting. As a former four-year college basketball player, I still shoot in the gym with remarkable accuracy. How? When I release a jump shot, I never take my eyes off the front of the rim. I started putting this way in July, and while I was uncomfortable at first, I gradually became more confident with this unusual style. I have now mastered this method from any distance. The line of the putt and the solid contact were never an issue. I just had to get used to the various distances. For any "yippers" out there, believe me: It's a method worth trying.

-GARY HUNT, VIA E-MAIL

Letters are edited for clarity and brevity.

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MEN OF MAGNITUDE

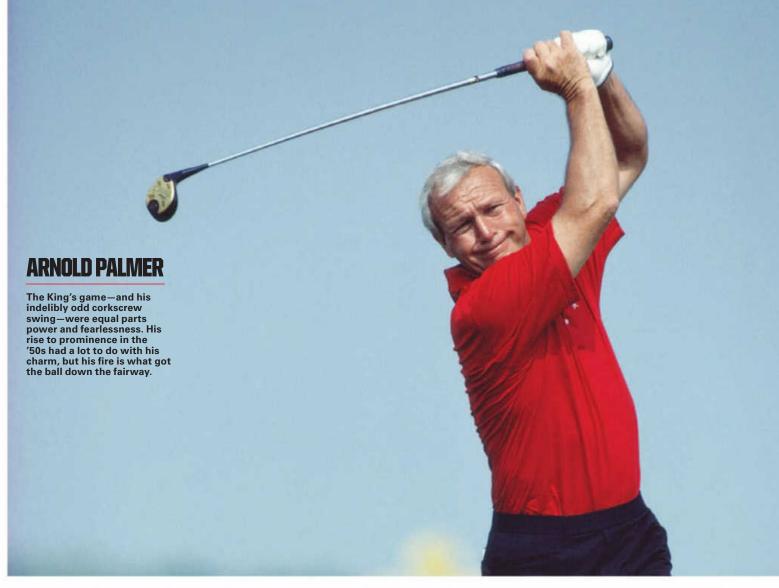
What do the members of golf's century-old Big **Bombers Club have** in common? Titanic talent, not titanium.

As our first ClubTest installment of 2016 shows, longer, straighter drives await you, thanks to today's whiz-bang gear. But how much does equipment help the world's best players? Frank Thomas would like to bust a myth about golf's sultans of swat. No, not the prodigious home-run hitter for the Chicago White Sox. The other Frank Thomasthe USGA executive who, from 1974 to 2000, helped protect the game from radical advances in club technology. Golf's Frank Thomas was standing guard in 1996 when the titanium driver made its Tour debut, yet he remains adamant about one thing: Golf's biggest beasts off the tee—from Ted Ray at the turn of the 20th century to Dustin Johnson in 2015-have gained their advantage largely with athleticism, not technology. "We've come to feel it's the equipment that gets the ball out there," Thomas says. And for you, the reader, that's substantially true. But it's not the whole story.

SAM SNEAD 32 Tour wins (still a record), including seven majors.



photos: HULTON-DEUTSCH COLLECTION/CORBIS (L); GETTY IMAGES (R)





TEEING

Thomas can talk spin rates and launch angles with the geekiest of them. This is the guy, after all, who invented the graphite shaft before joining the USGA as its technical director. He knows his coefficient of restitutions and the impact of titanium's springlike effect on the ball. He also knows that this perfect synthesis of tempo and tech can be harnessed by only a select-and sometimes unlikely-collection of jocks. "Bubba Watson is not a muscle-bound Mr. Universe," Thomas says. "But his timing and his swing is tremendous, and that's where he gets his distance. John Daly had an arc beyond anyone else's. He was generating extraordinary acceleration. On his backswing, the driver nearly touched his left knee!"





photos: **GETTY IMAGES**)

BUBBA Watson "Come out of your shoes" is not a recommended strategy for averaging 320 yards off the tee, as Bubba did in 2006. But a guy with this kind of coil wouldn't want it any other way. His swing thought could well be, Smooth it...with everything you've got.

TEEING

of 9

In other words, the best drivers of the ballboth today and a hundred years agobring something unique and exquisite to the tee: a mix of rhythm, flexibility and magic. Swagger helps, too. "Jack Nicklaus and I have been at each other for a long time," says Thomas, who's now applying his big brain to theshort stick (franklygolf.com). "I once mentioned to Jack that at the 1963 PGA Championship he won the long-drive contest with a drive of 341 yards." (Think about that: 341 yards in 1963with a persimmon club.) "And he pulled out a wad of cash with a gold money clip attached to it, slammed it on the table and said, 'Frank, this money clip was the prize for that driving contest, and it wasn't 341 yards. It was 341 yards and 17 inches.'" 🖪

photos: KOHJIRO KINNO/ SI (L); HARRY HOW/GETTY IMAGES (R)





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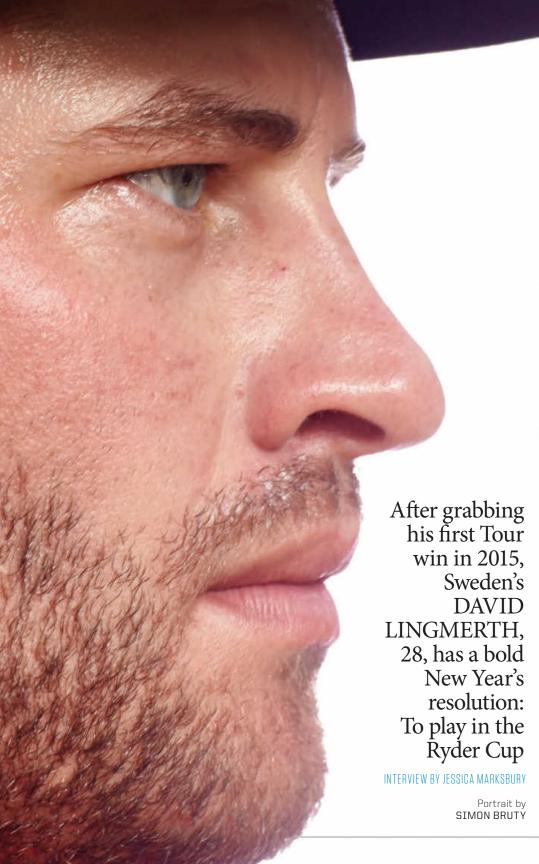
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EDITED BY CONNELL BARRETT

The Most Important Things in Golf



EYE TO EYE

Swede Dreams

>>> You won your first PGA Tour event last June, beating Justin Rose in a playoff at the Memorial. What moment stands out?

That feeling when you know you have a four- or five-footer to win the tournament and seal the deal. That's a special feeling, and the first time you have it, it's hard to explain. I'd been putting so well that week, and I was feeling very confident. And to see that putt [to win] go in, and to know I was finally a Tour winner, was amazing.

What was different about your game that week?

My mental game was so strong. And going into the playoff, I felt really calm. I knew what I was trying to do out there, and nothing really rattled me. I was cool. My mental game is what got me through the four rounds and the playoff. And I'll have to work hard to get that mental game every week, [because] that mindset is easier said than done.

EYE TO EYE DAVID LINGMERTH

How has your life changed since the win?

My tournament schedule changed a lot, because I became eligible to play a lot of tournaments that I wasn't eligible to play before. So that's a nice change. And then, obviously, just having that win—that's something no one can take away from me. It's one thing to be a PGA Tour player, but it's another thing to be a PGA Tour winner. I thought I was a good player, but now I have it in black and white that I can win. It's a boost of confidence.

Another perk, of course, is a spot in the Masters.

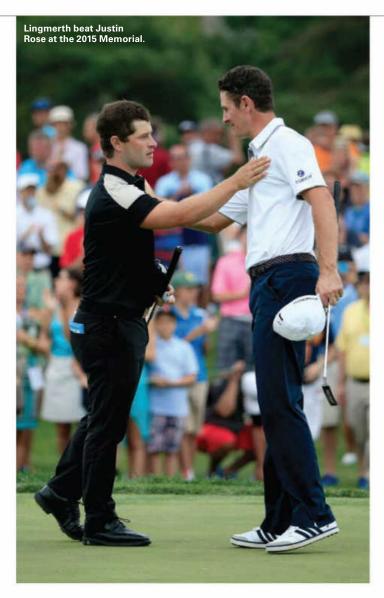
Oh, yeah. I've had chances to go to the Masters as a spectator, but I didn't want to make the trip until I was there as a player. And I've been watching it for so many years on TV—it's the best tournament to watch. But at the same time, it's been killing me the last few years [to not play in the tournament]. I don't want to watch it. [Laughs] I want to be there. It's going to be really cool when that week comes around.

You were born in Sweden, where golf is very popular. Who were your golf idols growing up?

Obviously, Jesper Parnevik and Annika Sorenstam are big names. They stood out as role models. Annika was amazing. She always won, so she got a lot of attention. And I believe Jesper was a top-five player in the world for a while. He had an amazing career, and everybody knew who he was because of the way he dressed and his hat. Stylish.

Henrik Stenson, Robert Karlsson, Jonas Blixt, Anna Nordqvist the community of Swedes on the professional tours is tight-knit. Do you all give each other support?

Yes, absolutely. We have an amazing amount of really good golfers from Sweden, considering how cold it is and how short the season is. That's a testament to how good our golf federation is. And [in Sweden] they make golf available for kids. It's affordable, and they have a good program in place.



ONE THING
I KNOW
FOR SURE

>> YOU'LL NEVER SEE ME USE A NO. 2 BALL IN COMPETITION

I wish I could give you a good explanation, but No. 2 balls just never worked for me. I don't know why. For some reason, lining up a No. 2 on the green made me feel like I was aoina to two-putt no matter what. So I just decided to put them in the trash. I do use them for practice rounds just to try to get rid of them. But I definitely don't trust them!

You went to college at the University of Arkansas. Did you know that golf was in your future even then?

At 15, I decided to give golf a real try. And I wasn't great. I was good, but I was not a great player. I didn't get recruited out of high school. So I fought hard to try to get to college somewhere and somehow. And I had to work hard in high school and throughout college and everything to try to steadily improve. It was a lot of effort. It eventually worked out the way I wanted it to, but it wasn't easy. It shows what hard work can accomplish. Arkansas was a great university. I never second-guessed the decision [to go there]. I had an awesome time.

This season is jam-packed with big events: the majors, of course, but also the Olympics and the Ryder Cup.

What would mean more—playing in the Olympics or your first Ryder Cup? I really want to give myself a chance to

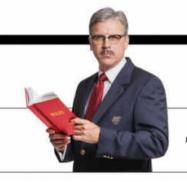
make the European Ryder Cup team, so I'm going to join the European Tour and play some tournaments over there, which means I'll be travelling all over the world. My schedule is going to be quite hectic. I took a couple of weeks off [in the off-season], because I'm not going to have a lot of time off [during the 2016 season].

So playing on the Ryder Cup team—that's the big dream?

It's the ultimate dream and honour to represent Europe in the Ryder Cup. I still have a long way to go to make that team, but I feel like it can be attainable. And I'm going to give it a good try this year and see if we can make that happen. That would be amazing, to say the least. **C**

ASK THE RULES GUY '

Got a question about the Rules? Ask the Rules Guy—he won't throw the book at you!



You can watch video rulings featuring Rules Guy himself! Go to golf.com/rules-guy



Dear Rules Guy:

Here's a scenario I'll bet vou've never run across. My ball came to rest in a rooted area behind a tree with low-hanging limbs. Although I had to take a crouched stance, it was possible to advance the ball. Alas, I whiffed. My clubface hit the tree and struck my ball on the rebound, sending it backwards 15 yards—into a perfect lie. Can I just play on from this position? -WAYNE BRATSCHI, VIA EMAIL.

Sorry, you can't play this one as it lies. Let's start with the whiff. Because you intended to hit the ball, the club's forward movement is considered a stroke, even though you missed. Plus, you incur a one-stroke penalty for inadvertently moving your ball, per Rule 18-2. And you must replace the ball where it was. From there, one option is to play it (again) as it lies. But if you feel twice shy after being once bitten, you

can declare it unplayable, add another stroke, and drop either behind the spot where the ball lies, in line with the hole, or within two club lengths from where the ball lies, not nearer the hole. If you do take the unplayable, don't choose stroke and distance. Here, so-called relief would only return you to the exact spot where you whiffed, but with a penalty stroke.

Rules Man:

At our club championship, my shot came to rest against chicken wire that was wrapped around a small tree next to the green. My ball was on the side of the tree closest to the green, so the tree impeded my swing. Do I get relief?

-BILL WALSH, VIA EMAIL

Wow, Firestone doesn't have as much tree trouble as this month's Rules Guy. Bill, if by "small" tree you mean "young," the Committee may protect it from damage by adopting the Local Rule in Appendix I; Part A; Item 2b. If this is the case, and the tree interferes with your stance or the area of your intended swing, relief can be taken without penalty, akin to an immovable obstruction. Just drop the ball within one club-length of-and not nearer the hole thanthe nearest point of relief. Alternately, if this Local Rule is not in effect and the wire has been declared an integral part of the course, you don't get relief

without penalty and may play the ball as it lies. Or you can proceed under Rule 28, which gives you three options, all with a one-stroke penalty: stroke and distance; a drop within two clublengths of the spot on which the ball lies, not nearer the hole; or a drop as far as you like along the line between the hole and where the ball lies.

Rules Guru:

In a match, my opponent's second shot to a two-tiered green embedded in the face of the green's upslope. He marked, replaced—and his ball rolled into the hole! He wanted to card an eagle 2. I argued that marking the ball ended the stroke and that this "roll" was a separate stroke. Who's right?

—JOHN ELLOTT. VIA E-MAIL

The debate is halved: You're both incorrect, says Decision 20-3d/1. When replacing a ball, it must come to rest on that spot; if it doesn't, you must try again. The ball rolling into the hole is unexpected but irrelevant. If it doesn't stay put the second time, find the nearest possible spot where it can be placed at rest, not nearer the hole and not in a hazard—even if that's off the green."

GOT A RULES QUESTION?

Of course you do! Whatever it may be, send yours to rulesguy@golf.com and the question may be answered in an upcoming issue of Golf. Until then, play by the Rules!





Follow Alan Shipnuck on Twitter @Alan Shipnuck

Not-So-Mad Men

With help from his unconventional coach, Bryson DeChambeau excels by fusing art and science

)) IT'S BEEN EASY to turn Bryson DeChambeau into a caricature. Last summer, as he was on his way to becoming just the fifth person to win the NCAA Championship and U.S. Amateur in the same year, the physics major with the funny clubs and the quirky swing was portrayed as Victor Frankenstein with a sharp short game. It's true that DeChambeau is a disciple of Homer Kelley's The Golfing Machine, the dense, scholarly tome that scientifically breaks down the swing into 24 components with endless variables. And it took tremendous mechanical know-how and extensive testing to perfect DeChambeau's one-of a-kind set of Edel irons, each of which is the same weight and length (37.5", a typical 7-iron). But to call DeChambeau a mad scientist ignores the artist within. On the wall of his bedroom in his family's home in Fresno, California, hangs a stippled drawing depicting Ben Hogan's famous 1-iron at Merion; it took DeChambeau four months to create it. He brings the same creativity to the links, having shaped a dazzling array of shots last summer en route to the historic double-dip that had previously been achieved only by Jack Nicklaus, Phil Mickelson, Tiger Woods and Ryan Moore.

Beyond DeChambeau's penchant for blending art and engineering lies the X factor that augurs superstardom: a work ethic that would have left even his hero Ben Hogan begging for mercy. DeChambeau left college last fall to prep for a pro career that will begin after this year's Masters. He calls it an "internship", but in a handful of cameos he's been playing like a boss, including finishing second



Beyond
DeChambeau's
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Hogan begging
for mercy.

at the Australian Masters. When DeChambeau is not at a tournament, his home base is the Mike Schy Golf Performance Institute, a fancy name for a tattered vinyl tent perched on the range at Dragonfly Golf Course, a humble public track marooned in an expanse of agricultural land just north of Fresno. DeChambeau is there every morning at 8 a.m. and closes it down after sunset, hitting 500 or so balls and as many chips and putts. I visited on a raw December afternoon. I wore a T-shirt, wool sweater, fleece jacket and down parka—and I was freezing. DeChambeau was chipper. I asked him if it was necessary to put in such long hours given his big-time talent.

"Ah, talent," he said, placing a just-shoot-me finger to his temple. "I hate that word. It's meaningless. No one is born with any intrinsic talent for anything. No child would ever walk if they weren't taught to do so and had people to model. It's the same with sports.

What people call talent is really just a skill that has been mastered through hard work."

DeChambeau's unique world view dovetails perfectly with that of Schy, a no-nonsense lifelong teaching pro prone to muttering amusing asides. "This whole thing is an experiment gone wrong," he says of his prized pupil's success.

Schy has been a Golf Machiner (his term) since the 1970s, but he let DeChambeau find it on his own. Bryson read the book when he was 15 and was thunderstruck by the concepts. "Why haven't you been teaching me this?" he'd asked Schy. "Of course I had been," his coach says today. "Just by a different name." It's instructive to note that neither Schy nor DeChambeau can pinpoint their first lesson together. "I've known him since he was eight, when he was hanging around on the range and we had a few conversations," Schy says. "It evolved over time."

Adds DeChambeau, "People have said to me, 'You could have any coach you want now—why don't you go to someone famous?' I'm sure the other guys are fine, but what Mike and I have is unique. It's a special bond. He understands me, and he lets me be me. We've built this together." Quite literally. The tent is filled with makeshift contraptions, disfigured clubs and cartoonishly large grips, all sacrificed in the name of progress.

During my afternoon at Dragonfly, a dozen promising junior and college players passed through the tent, with DeChambeau dispensing encouragement and wisecracks in equal measure. He thrives on the camaraderie. After sunset, he was finally alone with Schy, hitting balls, illuminated only by a spotlight at his feet. They spoke in an easy shorthand that bordered on a secret language. Over and over, the reigning United States Amateur champion's sweet, simple action sent balls sizzling into the darkness. It's impossible to know where DeChambeau will go from here, but there's no doubt where home will always be. If

MY BAG



Kevin Kisner

The Georgia Bulldog plays a bag full of Callaways

DRIVER

1) Callaway Great Big Bertha, 8.5°, Aldila Tour Green 75TX graphite shaft, 296 yards

IRONS

2) Callaway Apex Utility (3), Callaway Apex Pro (4-9). All with Nippon N.S. Pro Modus 3 Tour 120TX steel shafts

3-iron: 220 yards 4-iron: 210 yards 5-iron: 200 yards 6-iron: 190 yards 7-iron: 175 yards 8-iron: 165 yards 9-iron: 150 yards

HYBRID

3) Callaway X2 Hot Pro, 18°, Matrix Ozik Altus Tour shaft, 235 vards

WEDGES

4) Callaway Mack Daddy 2, 47°, 135 yards; 52°, 120 yards;

52°, 120 yards; 58°, 95 yards. All with Nippon N.S. WV 125 steel shafts

PUTTER

5) Odyssey White Hot Pro #7, 34.25", 3.5° loft

BALL

Titleist Pro V1



"I had to learn how to use my wedges different ways to hit different shots. I choke down a lot, and I try to practise off-speed shots because I know I'm not going to have a 120-yard shot every time." BY PETER KOSTIS

Golf Magazine Top 100 Teacher

More Is Less

The problem with modern teaching? Too much data! Go back in time to simplify your swing.

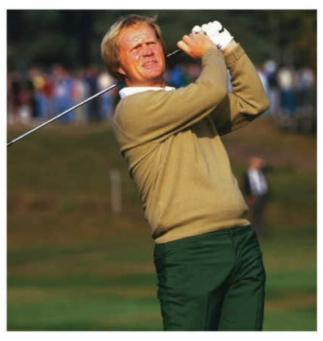
witnessed the emergence of a troubling trend in swing analysis: an overabundance of reliance on numbers. Launch monitors tell us way more than we need to know. Clubhead speed, attack angle, ball speed, launch angle, spin rate—and a lot more. Recreational players are beginning to treat this data like golf's Holy Grail, and their pursuit of perfect Tour-player numbers is not only stifling their improvement, it may also be destroying their bodies.

For 400 years or so, golf was played with the left heel coming up on the backswing and the left knee releasing behind the ball, with the hips and the torso turning freely. All of a sudden, around 30 years ago, the modern swing decided that was all wrong. Now you're told to keep your left heel down on the backswing and resist with your lower body to create torque and separation in the hips and shoulders. There is no real reasoning behind this philosophy, other than the fact that the 'reverse C' swing of Jack Nicklaus and Tom Watson was thought to cause back problems. Well, I'm here to tell you that this 'modern"

'swing has caused more back problems than ever before.

Why? When you try to create resistance in your lower body in the backswing, it results in a buildup of tension that causes the lower body to explode and get out in front of the through-swing. And when you 'hang back' or get stuck, that creates a secondary spine tilt, which is exactly what has caused so many problems for Tiger. The spine was never meant to twist that way.

"But Peter," I can hear you saying, "how can I possibly hit it farther off the tee if I'm not generating power



To hit it farther and avoid injury, you can learn a lot from Jack.

Teachers are trying to get everyday golfers to emulate the swing positions of top players, and that's just plain idiotic.

with more torque and tension?" My answer is this: Did Nicklaus hit it far? Does Bubba Watson? The average golfer needs to learn to free up his turn, release his left heel, and properly release

the right heel on the forward swing, a sequence found in the long-lasting swings of Watson, Nicklaus and Snead. Instead, a significant number of everyday golfers are now losing their natural athletic movement principles because of teachers using split-screen video analysis to try to get them to emulate the swing positions of top players. And to put it bluntly, that's just plain idiotic. Today's Tour players have to work out at unbelievable levels in order to produce and maintain their modern swings, and I fear that their bodies are not going to last. You can expect to see a lot more injuries from guys who don't have a natural flow in swing length and body rotation.

So please, as you work on improving your swing, don't get bogged down by the overabundance of information and data out there. Remember: Just because it's new doesn't mean it's better.

ASK PETER

Peter, how can I strengthen myself mentally for tournament play?

—Jane Martindale, via email

Playing well in the heat of competition is one of golf's great challenges. My advice? Practice under pressure on the range by playing nine or 18 imaginary holes. It's simple. See a given "hole" in your mind's eye and play it in proper sequence—say, driver, 5-iron, wedge—until you hit the green. Oh, and hit the shot dictated by your previous swing. If you hit a poor drive, don't just tee up another ball. Play a recovery shot, as you would have to on the course. Forcing yourself to execute shots under pressure during practice will make you more composed and less tense in competition and you play your very best when you're tension-free.

Got a question for Peter? Tweet him @peterjkostis or visit peterkostis.com.

Follow Mark Broadie on Twitter @MarkBroadie

The Big Short

It's common sense: To get the ball in the hole, you first have to reach the hole. So listen up—and club up on your approach shots.



WY ANALYSIS of millions of golf shots reveals a consistent finding: Approach shots account for the biggest scoring advantage between golfers of every skill level. The best golfers also gain strokes with their driving, short game and putting games, but approach shots are the greatest difference-maker. 'Approach' is a broad category. It includes all shots starting outside 100 yards from the hole, excluding tee shots on par-4 and par-5 holes. Within this category, shots from 150 to 200 yards are a prime separator of the best Tour pros from average Tour pros. It's a range that the weekend golfer can learn something from, too.

From 150 to 200 yards out, starting from the fairway or tee, Tour players hit the green 71 percent of the time. Sticking it to within 25 feet is an especially good outcome. Who among all Tour pros since 2003 (the start of the ShotLink era) holds the longest streak of knocking it that close from that distance? Tim Clark, with an amazing 24 in a row, in 2012. The tenacious South African learned that great approach

On approach shots from 120 to 180 metres out, weekend golfers struggle dramatically, landing only 22 of 100 balls on the putting surface.

shots alone aren't enough to win tournaments. During his streak of throwing darts, Clark shot rounds of 66, 67, 67 and 68, and finished T4 at the Travelers.

Not surprisingly, most weekend golfers struggle dramatically in that same 150- to 200-yard range. From that distance in the fairway, 15-handicappers will land only 22 of 100 balls on the putting surface, and their misses—principally caused by poor contact—are remarkably consistent: short and off target. (To help you better visualise the problem pattern, the yellow ellipse in the illustration at left shows where the shots are centred.) Of course, improving your line on every shot helps, but reaching the hole is what's critical.

In that regard, the weekend golfer who's looking for more approach-shot consistency would do well to play smarter in three key ways. (1) Be the authority on your distancesyou should be well acquainted with what your 5-iron, for example, will do. (2) Play meteorologist and topographer. Both wind conditions and the lay of the land (steeply uphill? gently downhill?) critically impact how far your shots travel. (3) Consider these factors, then choose the stick that gives you the best chance to hit the middle of the green. That extra 10 or 20 yards—the difference between coming up short and finding the centre of the dance floor—could be keeping you from a clubhouse trophy.



Here are a few approachshot-accuracy streaks from the Tour—the good, the bad and the ugly:

The longest 2015 streak of hitting the ball to within 25 feet of the hole from 150 to 200 yards out (from the tee or a fairway):



15 BROOKS KOEPKA

The longest 2015 streak of leaving the ball *outside* 25 feet from the hole from 150 to 200 yards out (from the tee or a fairway):



24 GARY WOODLAND

The longest streak since 2003 of hitting the green from 200 to 250 yards out (from the tee or a fairway):



BOO WEEKLEY,

The longest streak since 2003 of missing the green from 200 to 250 yards out (from the tee or a fairway):



20 LOREN ROBERTS, in 2004 Follow Dave Pelz on Twitter @dave_pelz

Win the Cold War

An indoor practice facility can help keep your game red-hot this winter





You can practise every kind of short-game shot at the Blessings indoor facility.

There are things you can do indoors—like dial in your sense of touch—that you just can't do outdoors.



Baby, it's cold outside. In the northern hemisphere, winter is still here, with icy ground covering much of the US. And chances are, your short game has turned to slush since the autumn. For those of you lucky enough to live in golf-friendly yearround climes, go easy on the gloating. The rest of you? Don't let Old Man Winter get you down. There are plenty of ways to keep your short game sharp until. For starters, you may live closer to an indoor practice facility than you realise. These sheltered havens are popping up all over, and I'm a big fan—so much so that I helped design one at Blessings G.C. in Fayetteville, Arkansas, home of the University of Arkansas men's and women's golf teams. It's one of my proudest achievements. Basically, it's a massive, climatecontrolled, perfectly lit short-game paradise. The greens accept shots like real grass greens do (our SynLawn synthetic turf features a patented shot-stopping underlayer; balls bite and stop when they have ample backspin and roll out when they don't). There are tight, plush fairway lies, which provide realistic ballclubface contact, and the greens feature the contours, slopes and elevation changes found at championship courses.

I've been making the trip to Blessings more and more recently. There are things you can do indoors that you can't do outside. First, we've made sure to re-create all the short-game lies you face during

the course of normal play: uphill, downhill, sidehill, and lags up to 80 feet. Second, you can dial in and work on your sense of feel, which is sometimes more important than actual technique. When I'm alone at the facility, I turn off all the lights except for the spots directly above my lie and my target (photo, bottom right). Why? This minimises the visual information flowing to my brain, letting me concentrate on the feel of a given shot while it's airborne: the darkness cloaks the ball until it lands. It's a great learning experience and a lot of fun.

So now you know what I've been doing all winter. Betweenseason improvement is possible. Indoor practice, however, isn't only for cold-weather months. Over the next several issues, I'll show you more of what the Blessings practice facility offers, and how you can build a world-class short game without ever hitting a traditional range.







Larry the Cable Guy

The blue-collar comedian discusses his bromance with Boo Weekley over a frosty glass of...water?

course. So I started watching

him, not because I love golf,

but because I love Boo. And

)) I admit it: I did not expect to be drinking water with you today.

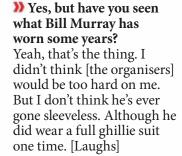
We're drinking water now, but later we'll get lit! [Laughs] I'm not a big drinker, but I enjoy a nice scotch, like a Macallan 12,

then I met him one day and we got to be buddies. And he sent me a set of clubs, and I started playing, and I got hooked. And within six when I have a cigar. months, I had spent about \$30,000 on golf stuff. [Laughs] Now it's pretty much all I do. We're here today to talk some golf. You love the game. I am golf's greatest

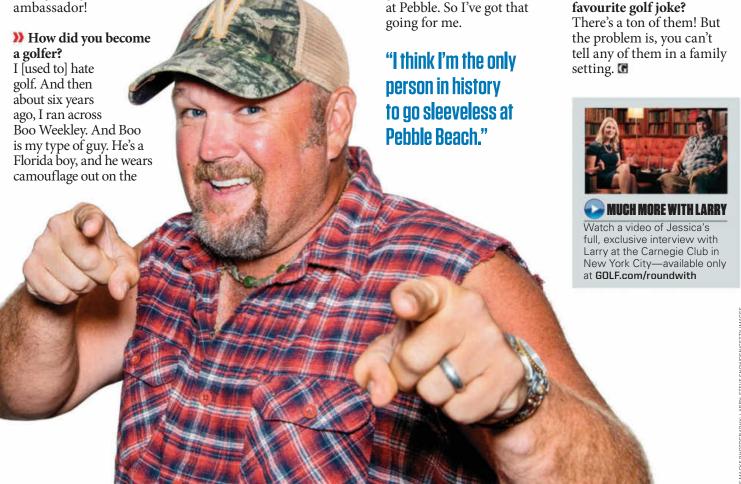
>>> You were invited to play in the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am last year. What was that like?

That was one of the funnest things I ever did. You've got all these people watching, so you get nervous, and I'm afraid I'm going to shank it and hit someone in the head. I think I'm the only person in the history of the event to go sleeveless [on the course] at Pebble. So I've got that going for me.

)) Golf and comedy go hand in hand. Got a favourite golf joke? There's a ton of them! But the problem is, you can't setting.







The Hogan Fascination

It's funny what you notice when you've been involved in this game for a while. So many paths seem to lead to one source, one influence, one man. And that man is Ben Hogan.



>> IN DISCUSSIONS OF SEMINAL SWING TECHNIQUE his name is usually the first on every teacher's lips. As a competitor his legendary persona dominated the golfing landscape, as a personality he was elusive, contradictory and compelling.

But this man is not easily deciphered. I suppose it's entirely appropriate that the search to understand Hogan, the method, and the man, is not an easy task. It reflects his journey through life, at times frustrating, often fruitful, but seldom easy. So, how did this one man come to have such a wide-ranging effect on the golfing world? Allow me to explain.

In his best years, be they fellow competitors, scribes, teachers, or the golfing public, most people who witnessed Hogan hit a ball believed he was the best striker they'd ever seen. Most of them could not imagine the ball being struck better. Literally exploding off the clubface, Hogan's shots would streak through the air like rifle shots. Towards the end of their flight they would fall gently to the right, the signature Hogan fade, so marginal you would only pick it if standing directly behind the line of flight.

Besides the directional control, the other aspect of his shots that always impressed was their trajectory. When Hogan addressed the ball it was as if a small window opened in the sky and allowed his ball to pass through it at the apex of its flight, always at the same consistent height for the particular club in use. And as every good player knows, if you control trajectory, you control distance. In the days before GPS and laser range finders, Hogan, playing by eye was renowned for being relentlessly pin high.

The golfing community was understandably fascinated by the swing that could produce this flight. Hogan was not a tall man and weighed only 61 kilograms. Yet with a compact action and pinpoint accuracy, he was also

one of the longest hitters of his time. Modern bio-mechanists believe that he created, and then transferred energy more efficiently than anyone in the game's history.

When watching top players, especially long hitters, it is evident that their lower body starts moving forward as their upper bodies, arms and club are still completing the backswing, winding the spring tight. Usually you can only pick this up in slow motion. But in Hogan's swing this dynamic move was plainly visible even at normal speed, such was the accentuated nature of this power-multiplying move.

Possibly Hogan's greatest influence on modern technique, however, comes in the area of swing plane. Hogan didn't invent the idea of swinging on plane, but he certainly elevated its importance in the lexicon of golf speak. His personal image of the ideal plane, (famously rendered by Anthony Ravielli in *Five Lessons*, visualised it being extended like a pane of glass from the golfer's shoulders to the ball. It is arguably the best-known image in golf instruction.

Generally, if you sit down with a group of teachers, after they stop talking about Hogan, they start talking about the key that unlocks good ball striking, swinging on plane. As Hank Haney says,

"Swinging on the correct plane is the most difficult thing in golf because it is the most important thing. In fact, the swing plane isn't just the most important thing, it is the only thing."

In my opinion, if you want the best understanding yet of what made Hogan's swing tick, refer to Jim Hardy's ground-breaking book *The Plane Truth for Golfers*, detailing the workings of the one-plane Swing. Hogan was its ultimate exponent.

But I think what fascinates people the most about the development of Hogan's game is not just that he was the ultimate technician. There's been plenty of other great ball strikers such as Jack Nicklaus, Tiger Woods, Jordan Spieth and Rory Mcllroy. All were or are great ball strikers. What separates them is that they were always great. When they were 15-year-olds, they were all one of the best 15- year olds in the world. Because of this, people admire them, but they

can't necessarily identify with them. Trust me, whatever average golfers say about "just playing for the fun of it", scratch just under the surface and they all generally believe that with enough work, they could be a decent player.



"Swinging on the correct plane is the most difficult thing in golf because it is the most important thing. In fact, the swing plane isn't just the most important thing, it is the only thing"

I believe what's intriguing to them about Hogan is that he seems to have made this progression. He was really pretty average during his first 10 years on tour. Having a tendency to hit duck-hooks doesn't generally lead to instant success.

But Hogan was one of the first great practicers. Saying that he "dug it out of the earth" is a quite literal explanation of the process he went through. In fact, considering it was the time of the Great Depression, he was lucky he lived in Texas and not the Mid-West, with the amount of soil he shifted people might have though he was responsible for creating the Kansas dust bowl! But when he did finally find his personal

secret, he cured the hook, and was phenomenally successful.

For the average golfer believing that their own swing secret, however elusive, may be just around the corner is integral to their enjoyment of the game. In fact for many it's the only the reason they keep playing. Hogan's progression from average to immortal is this philosophy taken to its ultimate expression, proof positive that you can find that one swing thought, that *holy grail*, which for you makes it all hang together.

Of course it takes work to find it. In later years when people quizzed him about his famous secret, Hogan was fond of saying, "The secret is in the ground." Guess what? The bad news for most people, this writer included, is unfortunately, it still seems to be in there!

I'd be remiss if I didn't share at least a couple of my favourite Hogan stories with you. Ben Hogan was famously taciturn, supposedly without humour, and these stories about him have passed into golfing folklore. The first one involves a young Gary Player ringing him late one night to ask a question about the golf swing only to be asked what brand of clubs he was playing,

"Why I'm playing Slazenger clubs Mr. Hogan" replied Player.

"Well, maybe you should ask Mr. Slazenger your question." Hogan retorted promptly hanging up. (Hogan had just recently started manufacturing his own line of clubs).

Or his reply to 1959 USPGA champion Dave Marr, when as a young assistant professional Marr passed him on the clubhouse steps and good naturedly said, "Good morning, Mr. Hogan." Hogan stopped him dead in his tracks with his trademark steely gaze. "Son, don't ever call someone mister that you might have to play someday."

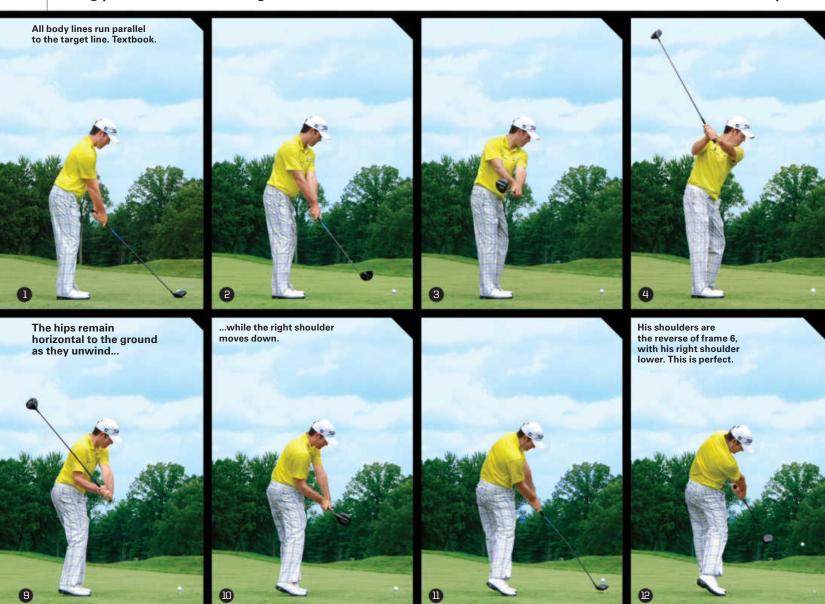
Hogan was brutally honest, with the world and himself, and it often jarred.

So there you have it, innovator, battler, genius, legend. Hogan was all of those, and more. I would say we're highly unlikely again to see anyone have the kind of influence he's had. In a way it makes perfect sense that only the greatest of men, should have had such a lasting impact on this great game.

SWING SEQUENCE

Watch • Learn

Copy Robert Streb's "split-off" move for mammoth drives that never miss the fairway



Analysis by Top 100 Teacher
MIKE PERPICH
Sequence photography by
MARK NEWCOMBE/VISIONS IN GOLF
Portrait by
SAM GREENWOOD/GETTY IMAGES



NOBODY'S CALLING ROBERT STREB a 'young gun' yet, but the 28-year-old Oklahoman is making a strong case for the title. Streb ended the 2015 Tour season with a win at the McGladrey Classic, along with eight other top-10s, missing only five cuts in 30 events. He can credit much of his success to his postcard-perfect setup. Look at frame 1. All we see is Streb's right side,

which completely blocks the view of anything on his body's left. Everything—toe line, hip line, shoulder line and eye line—points in the same direction.

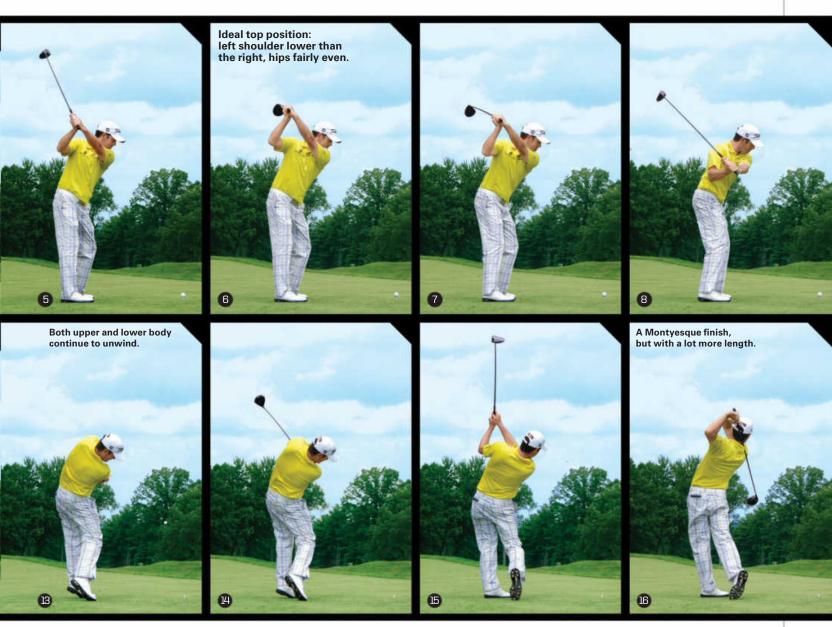


The Line 297.1 vds
On Streb

Average Driving

69.1%

116.8^{mph}



This 'neutral' setup eliminates idiosyncrasies that can creep into a swing. In other words, he fixes faults before they happen.

Streb's other cool move? Check frames 7 through 11. As his lower body unwinds on a horizontal plane with his belt turning parallel to the ground, his upper body 'splits off' and starts to unwind toward the ground. Effectively, his right shoulder retraces in his downswing the path it took to the top of his backswing. Splitting delivers the club to the ball on the ultimate power path. Give it a whirl—the move may be new to you, but good players have been exploiting it for years.





Swing and a Miss

To mark the return of ClubTest, Extra Spin reveals some gear ideas that (thankfully) never made it to market



Me-More Putter

This mallet-headed birdiemaker could shave strokes off your score and convert into a selfie-stick to capture mid-round moments. Paceof-play advocates are blamed for its demise.

Big Bertha Driver, Woodrow Wilson edition

It promised "explosive distance" from a clubhead made of actual WWI artillery. Deemed too explosive.

Ginsu Forged Irons

The feel of blades, said PR copy. "Plus, it slices, dices and cuts beer cans in half."

Banana Balata Ball

Billed as "the anti-banana banana ball—made with real banana," it featured a multilayer cover and liquid centre filled with Gerber baby food. Low in spin, high in potassium. It slipped and fell in prototype phase.

Red Bull's Eye Putter

Innovative shot-glass head vowed to "cut down on twisting through hit and facilitate twistedness—just add vodka."

Mashie Niblet

Designed by Idaho survivalists, this 9-iron forged from dehydrated animal protein was built to prevent starvation amid slow rounds and/or an unprovoked attack by the US government.

Double Aces

Just a few turns of the scewdriver would transform this super-adjustable driver into a tennis racquet, so you can play an easier sport.

Yeti Driver 🙈

In an attempt to one-up Nike's Sasquatch, the Yeti's octagonal head was covered in matted, brown fur, apparently designed for cold climates. There are rumours of extreme forgiveness, but no one's ever actually seen the club.

Mussolini Fine Italian Irons

Adjustability let you switch sides any time, and play righty or lefty.

The Placebo

Used the exact same design as your old putter, but with so much marketing, you'd swear it cured your yips.

The Nuke

Warhead-shaped driver from North Korea design team. Reason for rejection: Couldn't be verified



BASEBALL SHOT

Degree of difficulty:

>>>>>> 6/10

When it's useful: The ball comes to rest at waist height on the side of a hill or finger of a bunker. The ultimate hanging lie!

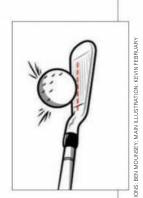
How to hit it: "The key is solid contact," says Top 100 Teacher Brady Riggs. "Keep your body quiet and don't overswing. Otherwise, it's normal mechanics."

1. Choke down.

You're closer to the ball than you would be for a typical shot off the ground, so you've got to effectively reduce the length of the shaft. Hold the club near the

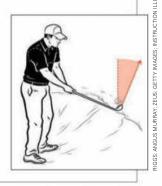
bottom of the grip, but feel free to make adjustments depending on the height of the ball.

2. Aim right. Because the ball is near waist high, treat this as an extreme hook lie. The ball will want to shoot left. In order to counter this likely right-to-left shape, aim well right of your target. The spin will also tend to make the ball run out more than from a normal lie, so plan accordingly.



3. Quiet body.

Even if you're the Mike Trout of your softball league, you probably haven't hit many golf balls from this height. For solid contact, keep your lower body steady and simply focus on getting the club on the ball. **G**



THE GOLF Gods Must Be Crazy

>>> After taking up the game just three years ago, a 73-year-old grandmother from New York City recently scored two holes-in-one in the same round. Her second ace came with a driver, from 100 metres.

EDITED BY DAVID DENUNZIO

Powered by the Top 100 Teachers



If your putts-per-round stat is something you don't post on Facebook, it's all good. Honing a reliable stroke is actually easy. The secret? Eliminate excess hand movement, a feat that almost anyone (apart from the yip-afflicted) can achieve. Turn the page for three stroke-steadying tips. Quiet hands will help you bury putts from the all-important scoring zone of 10 feet and in. Get ready to go drain-o!

Photography by **DAVE BREDESON**

to draining more birdies and pars.

> Proven Ways to Shoot Your Best Score Ever!



DRAIN MORE **PUTTS**

You're three steps away from being a birdie machine

STROKE SECRETS

The best putting strokes are simple: uncomplicated and easy to repeat, just like the ones you see the pros make. Let's look at the 2015 Tour numbers from the all-important scoring zone of 10 feet and in.

DISTANCE	PGA TOUR MAKE %
<5FT	96.6
3-5 FT	87.7
5-10 FT	56.6

Sure, we're talking about the world's best players, but you-yes you—can put this well, too. It doesn't take crazy talent to stroke it pure from short range. Just tweak your technique and power your stroke with your body, not your hands. Copy the positions at right, and with some practice, you'll relegate your hands to a supporting role. Less hand action means less manipulation and a lot more makes.

MAKE A SHAFT-FOREARM MATCH

As you set up to the ball, make sure the shaft and your forearms line up (photo below), and that your wrists are neither bowed nor cocked. To get it right, you may have to bend more at the hips or stand a bit taller. Do what it takes. With this arrangement, your hands are less likely to move independently of your arms, leading to a squarer clubface and putts that start on-target.

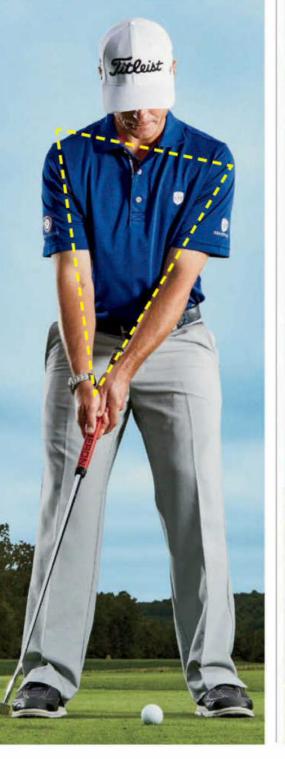


Mark Blackburn Greystone G.C., Birmingham, Ala





A final setup adjustment: Point your sternum directly at the ball. Together with the moves in Step 1, you're now set up to start back simply by moving the triangle that your shoulders and arms form. Your stroke has structure and integrity—and zero hand influence.





POINT THE GRIP AT YOUR GUT

Maintain your triangle and keep the butt end of the club pointing at the same spot on your torso from start to finish. This establishes a fulcrum, which is critical—it lets you deliver the putterhead to the ball on a consistent path and rise angle. You'll get reliable loft and rollout, too, giving you Tour-caliber distance control.



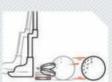
HOME SCHOOL

CAN'T GET TO THE RANGE? NO PROBLEM. ROLL IT BETTER WITH THESE AT-HOME PUTTING DRILLS

Improve your putting without leaving the comfort of your living room with these two easy drills. They teach you how to strike the ball with the putterhead travelling on the correct path and rise angle—secrets to a pure roll.



1.
Make a putting
"gate" with two
books as shown
(spines to the
inside). Your
goal? Stroke
putts without
contacting either
book. This builds
a neutral path
through impact—
ideal for starting
the ball on line.



2. Stack three coins in place of the ball. Try to displace the top two when you make your stroke. Mirror this move with a ball and you'll generate true, end-overend roll.

TOS ANGUS MUBBAY. ILLUSTRATIONS BENIADUNSEY

Stand behind the ball and grip the club with your left hand only. It's simple: Just grab the handle without looking. This sets your left hand in its natural power position. Wrist angle varies from player to player—I like to keep my wrist slightly bent.



Depending on your anatomy, your left wrist will be either flat or flexed (like mine). What's important is that you maintain your left wrist position as you swing. Changing it disrupts your hitting instinct. Take note of the flex and accept it.



Put your right hand on the club and take your address, maintaining the position of your left wrist. Take a last look at the target and start back. Have no fearyou're one step away from catching the ball smack on the sweet spot!





LPGA Tour star Jessica Korda

Jessica Korda has notched four wins on the LPGA Tour.







HOW TO PLAY A REDAN HOLE

The way to tame these tilted par 3s

) A Redan is a mini masterpiece—a bunker-laden par 3 with the green set on a diagonal to the tee box and tilting right to left. The original Redan, on the West Links at North Berwick, near Edinburgh, has spawned many imitators. These little devils are everywhere. Hitting it close is a challenge. It's all about choosing the tactic that works for your playing style.

BE A PURIST

THINK 'LOW' TO GO LOW

The first Redans were built on links courses, which are designed to accept low, running approach shots. Don't buck tradition! Ignore the pin. Grab the club that reaches the front-right section of the green with a punch-style draw. If you hit your spot, the ball will land and run back and across the green—right next to the hole. —Bernie Najar

HIT A FADE

BE SAFE, NOT SORRY

The problem with aiming for the high point on the right side? If you fly it too far, the ball will run off the back instead of toward the traditional back-left pin position. So buck tradition! If the wind is down, tee the ball nice and high on the right side of the box, aim at the left-centre of the green, and fade it. You'll avoid the bunker that typically fronts the left side of the green, and the ball may still catch enough slope to funnel toward the hole.

—Ted Sheftic



JUST CATCH IT SOLID

THIN CONTACT IS YOUR ENEMY

I've played the original Redan four times, along with countless replicas. Pictures simply don't do them justice. For starters, you can't always see the green—it's truly a "hit and hope" scenario. Take an extra club and focus on contact, not speed. The last thing you want is a thinned shot. Anything less than flush impact will fail to hold the green, regardless where you aim.

—GOLF Travel Editor Joe Passov

Watch

Redans you'll see Tour pros play: 17th, Waialae C.C.; 13th, TPC Sawgrass; 8th, Greenbrier Old White TPC.



News flash: Your putter is making you miss. So claims Paul Wood, vice president of engineering at Ping and a master putter designer.

According to Wood, "Through years of research, and while working on our iPing mobile app, we found that players who choose a putter without accounting for how they putt are much more likely to miss putts in all directions than those who do."

This customization goes far beyond fitting for specs such as loft and lie. "The trick," Wood says, "is to look at the shape of your stroke and then select a putter with a weighting scheme designed to

augment that shape." There are two basic style options: toe weighted and face-balanced. "The more arc you have in your stroke, the more toe-weighted your putter should be. Like to putt piston-style? You'll fare better with a face-balanced model." (Your putter is face-balanced if the face points toward the sky when you balance the club on your finger near where the shaft enters the hosel. But if the toe droops, it's toe-weighted.)

You probably have some arc in your motion. Despite the popularity of face-balanced putters, Ping estimates that only 20 percent of golfers can repeat a piston-

style stroke. "You can see why there's a problem," Wood adds.

If you don't know your stroke shape, just observe your misses. "If you miss left more often than right, opt for a toe-balanced putter," Wood suggests. The reason? Toe-weighted putters tend to stay open through impact, while face-balanced models tend to close. On the other hand, if you push a lot of putts, a face-balanced putter can help correct the mistake. At the very least, you should experiment. Somewhere out there is the perfect putter for you.

-Michael Chwasky

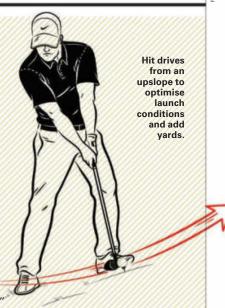
SUCCESS STORY

THAT'S HOW
MUCH THIS
READER
BOOSTED HIS
DRIVES IN A
SINGLE LESSON.
HERE'S HOW.



Marketing executive Andrew Usher didn't take long to shop for the right swing coach.

"Our company, Vidanta Resorts, recently hired Top 100 Teacher Tom Stickney to direct our academies," says Usher, 52. "All I had to do was walk across the range." It was a good walk not spoiled. In a single TrackMan session, Stickney helped Usher, a single-digit handicap, add 10 yards off the tee. "Tom showed me that I was launching my drives too low," says Usher. Stickney's fix? "I had Andrew tilt more to the right at address and hold the tilt longer through impact," Stickney says. "He hit some shots on a sloping part of the range (right) to ingrain the feel of hitting up on the ball." Usher's drives instantly picked up airtime, going from an apex of 85 feet to 105 feet. "I'm amazed," Usher says. "I hit it higher and longer-and I didn't have to swing a lick harder!





Get into your regular putting stance—yes, even if you slouch, like above.

FAULT FIXER

HERE'S A **HUNCH**

Fix your posture, stop pulling putts

Slumping forward in your putting setup hurts you in two ways: It aggravates your back, and it causes pulls—and lots of three-putts. How? Slouching gets your upper body closer to the ball, which lifts the toe of the putter off the ground and points the face to the left (near photo, right). Now the good news: It's actually easy to correct your posture and eliminate pulled putts. And you don't even need to practise these three moves. Simply add them to your pre-putt routine and you'll soon be rolling it right at the hole.



TAKE THE LUNGE

This fast, easy move will strengthen your legs and super-size your drives

Mat the gym, I stick to drills that improve both my physique and my swing. This exercise gets your back into the correct hitting posture while strengthening your legs, a combination that will help you make a power push at impact.

It's easy and only takes a minute or two. Stand erect with your driver held flat against your back-you don't want any curve in your spine. Next, step forward with your right foot and drop your left knee toward the ground. Keep your right shin perpendicular to the ground and your back and club straight. Step back and repeat with the left leg. Do 20 reps daily for three days a week, then copy the straight-back feel when you swing. You'll end up miles down the fairway.



STEP 1 Stand erect with your back straight. Use your driver to make sure you don't slouch.

STEP 2 Lunge forward, keeping your back straight. Building better posture like this pays huge dividends on the

Blair O'Neal is a former Big Break contestant and NCAA Women's Long Drive champion.

DRINK UF

Golf is rarely strenuous, but between walking the course, muscling shots out of ankle-high rough and grinding out the perfect read on the greens, you burn a lot of fuel. Some nourishment helps.

TO BOOST YOUR ROUND

"Sports drinks such as Gatorade and Powerade perform as advertised, providing necessary electrolytes, fluids and carbs for quick bursts of energy," says Amy Goodson, a sports dietitian at Ben Hogan Sports Medicine in Fort Worth, Texas. "But since your game deserves more than just a burst, pair swigs of your favourite sports drink with a granola bar, beef jerky or trail mix. That will provide plenty of energy for a full 18 holes.

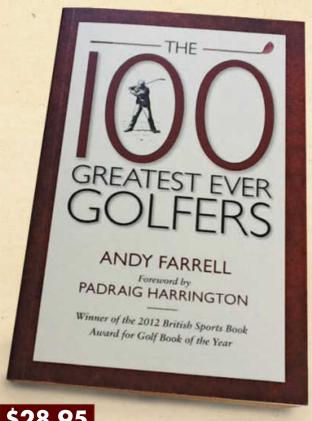
Consider alternatives to beverages, too, such as EAS Hydrate (eas.com), a powder that promises fast hydrationto replace the nutrients lost through sweating in a typical workout. "Again, adding a carb-protein snack makes sense, whatever your hydration choice may be," Goodson says

-Sean Zak



FROM OLD TOM MORRIS,
WALTER HAGEN AND
BEN HOGAN...
TO CONTEMPORARY GREATS
INCLUDING TIGER WOODS
AND RORY MCILROY...

THE 100 GREATEST EVER GOLFERS IS A FASCINATING AND KNOWLEDGEABLE HISTORY OF GOLF told through the most italented men and women to have ever played the game. From Old Tom Morris, via Walter Hagen and Ben Hogan, legendary figures such as Bobby Jones and Jack Nicklaus, to contemporary greats including Tiger Woods and Rory Mcliroy, Andy Farrell recounts the lives and achievements of the sports leading lights through engaging text, fascinating anecdotes and insights into the development of the game across the decades. Arranged by era and with additional sections on the greatest ever drivers, bunker players and putters, The 100 Greatest Ever Golfers is the ideal pick-up-and-dip-in book for all golfing aficionados, whatever their handicap



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TomTom's range of fitness watches helps you with your health as well as your golf game.

Every day millions of people around the world depend on TomTom to make smarter decisions. Best known for being a global leader in navigation and mapping products, TomTom has had a busy year, building their range of GPS Fitness Watches, as well as state-of-the-art fleet management solutions and industry leading location based products.

Since their inception TomTom has been designing and developing innovative products across their categories. Whether this means getting to your destination faster with their range of GO GPS drive devices; filming stunts, adventures and travels with their Bandit Action Camera; reaching a PB when you run, cycle, swim or train with their Spark range of GPS Fitness Watches; or a way to lower your handicap using their Golfer watch.

The TomTom Golfer is one of our favourites within TomTom's growing family of fitness watches. Designed with golfers in mind, this ultra-slim, light weight and durable watch offers an extra-large display so you can see all real-time course information at a glance. Pre-loaded with course data from 40,000 international courses it is perfect for travel, international tournaments (yes, legal for tournament play), or your weekly/daily golf games. The TomTom



Golfer pairs up to the MySports desktop software and either an iOS or Android app. Once you have synced with your smartphone, there's no need to ever tether to a PC again. The app is able to update all course information automatically to make sure you are always playing with the right course information.

The TomTom Golfer is a great device for all golfers looking for an extra edge on the course, and retailing at \$299.00 it won't break the bank.

tomtom.com/en_au/sports/golf/





WATCH THE NUMBERS



During your game, know every inch of the course with unique graphics, and precise yardages to hazards. Know your way to the green (front, centre and back) so you can hit the perfect approach shot each time. The TomTom Golfer will recognise which hole you're on at that moment, the shot distances will change automatically as you walk towards your ball, and switch to the next hole when you are ready. The TomTom Golfer also keeps track of your total round time, the distance travelled during the game (total kilometres walked), and also estimates your calorie burn for those who are interested.



GIRD DOWNER Women Share Passion for Game

Many high profile women share a passion for golf and a desire to encourage other women and girls to get involved in the sport. For them, the game presents a competitive challenge, a social network, great exercise and an opportunity to spend quality time outdoors with family and friends. Paul Prendergast reports.

Interview By Paul Prendergast Photos by GETTY IMAGES

etballer **Sharelle McMahon's**Roots in the game of golf run deep. The nation's second highest capped netballer is connected to the game by birth and marriage.

McMahon's introduction to the game came via a well-worn rite of passage for many, running amok as a child around the local club at Bamawm in country Victoria while her parents were out playing.

"Mum and Dad played every Sunday and everyone who played used to bring their kids down," McMahon said. "We would just terrorise the clubhouse and then we'd go out and play a few holes when they finished. We used to spend hours and hours there."

For McMahon and sister Kate, the time on the sand-scrape greens at Bamawm endeared both to the game over the longer term. While Sharelle's sporting pathway took her to the very heights of netball, Kate became an outstanding golfer and is a scratch marker in Ballarat, recently breaking the course record at the club.

A veteran of 118 Tests, McMahon retired from netball at the end of the 2013 season and gave birth to her



GIRL

second child, Ruby, in late 2015, for the time being forcing a hiatus from golf and just about any other time consuming activity

"Over the last few years, I've barely played at all. My son is three and with one fairly keen golfer (husband Brek Mansfield) in the house, it's pretty hard to have two. Now I've got another baby so it's certainly put the brakes on things.

"I play a bit around Latrobe Golf Club (in Melbourne) and when we go home for Christmas, we play up there a bit. Spending time together on the golf course with my family is special time. We're spread out across the country a little. So getting back and having that time together on the golf course is always great."

"Growing up in the country and moving to Melbourne when I was 16 to play netball, the things I love about being on a golf course are the open spaces and the peace you can get. I love that aspect of golf and it kind of reminds me of being home a little bit."

Like all elite athletes, McMahon has high expectations of herself when playing sport and would go out to play golf once or twice a month and expect to play well every time. "And I could do that maybe only a couple of times a round. So that used to be a bit frustrating for me," she laughed.

"It's quite a different competitive challenge for me because you're competing against yourself, whereas I've spent most of my time playing netball with a direct opponent that you're trying to beat.

"I've always liked and enjoyed challenging myself, so that was another great thing for me about golf, that personal challenge and trying to push yourself on that level.

"Golf is a unique thing in a way because you have that time to have fun with the people you're playing with as well. I love that social aspect of golf."

Fifth generation winemaker Stephen Henschke of the acclaimed Henschke Cellars in South Australia is an avid golfer but he has long conceded that his wife andHenschke viticulturalist, Prue, is the golfer in the family.



"IT'S QUITE A DIFFERENT COMPETITIVE CHALLENGE FOR ME BECAUSE YOU'RE COMPETING AGAINST YOURSELF"



Prue Henschke is as passionate about the game now as she was when she first plucked up the courage to enrol in junior clinics at the Glenelg Golf Club in Adelaide during her first year of high school at age 12.

"I went along with my hickory shaft sticks and got involved," she said.

"Golf clicked with me mainly because you weren't fighting to get into a team. I played a lot of tennis and was trying to get into the hockey team at school and didn't make it. So golf took that place as my winter sport."

Prue, who maintains her Glenelg membership to this day, progressed quickly into a junior squad. This allowed her access to the course on Sunday mornings in addition to regular coaching clinics.

'I ended up representing South Australia in the Burtta Cheney Cup, which was a competition between Victorians and South Australians.

"(Former LPGA player and Women's Australian Open champion) Jane Crafter and I were in a junior squad together. I was talking to her just the other day and hope to catch up with her when she's home for the Women's Australian Open. We still keep in contact, which is lovely."

Henschke grew up during what she calls 'that dreadful period' when male and female golfers were segregated and often girls weren't allowed to play in competitions at all.

Without going into too much detail Henschke revealed that on more than a few occasions she dressed as a boy so she could play in junior competitions. That meant playing off the white tees alongside the boys. She admits it was tough on her handicap but that's how dedicated she was as a youngster.

"It's really important, I think, that kids don't see that sort of pretentiousness in golf anymore. It's much, much better now," she said,

"I play once a week at Tanunda Pines (in the Barossa Valley) and there's no segregation at all. It's a great atmosphere, an amazing social event when we all get together. We have a great group of women and guys and we just have such a great time.

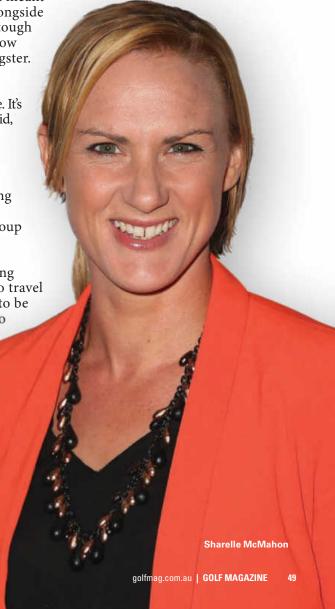
"The benefits (from playing golf) are amazing. You get to travel and meet people, you learn to be diplomatic; to present and to

congratulate.

"You take the whole etiquette of the game on board and it develops a lot of social skills."

Brisbane-based TV presenter and all-round bundle of energy, Sam **Squiers**, splits her time between a myriad of activities when

she's not providing nightly sports reports or hosting the Nutri-Grain Ironman and Ironwoman Series for Channel Nine and Fox Sports.





Sixty seconds into a conversation with Squiers and you quickly form a mental picture of the Squiers household being uncluttered by such niceties as lounge chairs and other creature comforts.

The daughter of a winemaker in her hometown of Orange, NSW, Squiers' idea of relaxation is to pour herself into marathon running, surfboat rowing, softball, cycling, netball and basketball among a list of frenetic pursuits.

Squiers' introduction to the game was beating balls for fun at the Moore Park Driving Range in inner Sydney, but she has taken her involvement up a notch since she and husband Ben moved to Brisbane a few years ago.

True to form, when Squiers takes to the fairways these days, it's at the challenging Brookwater Golf and Country Club layout.

"I was a late starter to golf. I played state softball and I used to love swinging and hitting, so I'd go down the driving range now and then.

"When I was working in Sydney, all the guys used to get invited to corporate days but the girls in the office never did. There was a side of me that wanted to learn to play because the guys were doing it and liking it.

"I just hated that we weren't doing it because we were girls, so that was a little bit of a motivation for getting into it.

IN ADDITION TO HER TELEVISION CAREER, SQUIERS IS THE FOUNDER OF SPORTETTE, A WEBSITE SHOWCASING WOMEN INVOLVED IN ALL ASPECTS OF SPORT.

"I started to get lessons up in Brisbane and started to get better and to love the game even more. After work, we often head out at night to the range, which I love. It's a great way to de-stress after a hectic day before going to bed."

In addition to her television career, Squiers is the founder of Sportette, a website showcasing women involved in all aspects of sport. Her passion for stories about female participation is abundantly clear and she has a strong belief that women can be the answer to some of golf's participation issues.

"Every year, you see participation figures in golf clubs on the decline because people are time poor and need to spend time with their families. If the families aren't involved in golf, then golf is the first thing that will be sacrificed.

"However, if you get your wives or girlfriends and people my age into golf and they can understand it and love it, then you can spend time with family if the women are involved. Men are then less likely to give the game up, so I think a quick answer is to get more women involved in golf."

Squiers concedes she finds it hard to find women in her age group who play golf and when she does, "I try to cling on to them and go out and play." she laughed.

It's certainly a situation she'd like to see improve given women are participating in a range of other outdoor activities in droves.

"I hope a lot of women don't think that you had to be involved in golf as a kid to be able to play. If you want to pick up a club at the age of 30, that's not too late to pick up the game.

"It's never too late to pick up the game."

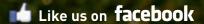


SUMMER OF SHE

Six-month membership (October to March)

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Vale Dan Cullen, DFC

By Michael Davis Photos Courtesy of PGA and Cullen Family

an Cullen could always spin a yarn right up until the days before he died.

Once, at a club cocktail party, a member who was unaware of his decorated WWII career in the air force asked him if he had ever been to Germany.

"Yes, I have," Cullen said.

"What is it like?" the member asked.

"I don't know, Cullen, quipped, "I only went there at night time."

He was, of course, referring to the 32 dangerous missions he had flown over Germany in Lancaster bombers during the war.

He was always extremely proud of his war record, telling an interviewer not long before his death: "I take great pride in the air force. I think the air force training and the air force career did nothing but good for me.

"Even today, I think it's always in the back of your mind; you sort of put your life on the line, you've sort of taken over yourself, there's something you didn't want to do, you've taken hold of yourself and you've done the bloody job, you've got on with it and you've come home again."

Cullen died on Australia Day after battling a short illness. He was the PGA's longest serving and oldest member. He was 101.

In 1941, he enlisted in the RAAF. Even though he didn't even have his car licence at the time, he was soon entrusted with flying planes.

For three years, he piloted Lancaster bombers over Europe—a job that held less than a one-in-four chance of surviving.

Cullen piloted 32 operational flights over Europe and survived.





"It's a sad day for the PGA and the golf industry, we've lost a doyen of the game," said Brian Thorburn, chief executive officer of the PGA.

"Dan contributed greatly to the sport of golf as both a club and tournament professional, not to mention his bravery and heroics during World War II.

"He will be sadly missed and our thoughts and sympathies are with the Cullen family at this time," Thorburn said. •



His heroics under fire earned Cullen the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC).

He somehow managed to beat the odds. But it wasn't without incident.

On a routine bombing run over Friedrichshafen in April, 1944, Cullen's plane was crippled and his crew were injured after being struck by an enemy shell.

Despite the situation, Cullen continued the mission and eventually landed safely with only one engine in operation.

The next morning, Cullen's plane was assessed. The inspectors stopped counting after 150 holes.

His heroics under fire earned Cullen the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC).

And in July last year, he also received the Legion d' Honneur Medal—the highest decoration in France—for his war service.

He not only beat the odds in the air force; in 1977 and at the age of 64, Cullen became the oldest qualifier for the British Open.

He teed off in a field including Jack Nicklaus, Seve Ballesteros, Bob Shearer, Graham Marsh and Gary Player.

After the war, Cullen was appointed club professional at Sydney's Roseville Golf Club before moving to St Michael's Golf Club.

Between 1948 and 1960, Cullen served as director and chairman of the NSW PGA.

He became president of the PGA in 1951 and held the role until 1955.

Born in Bunbury, Western Australia in 1914, Cullen learnt the basics of the game without any golf equipment.

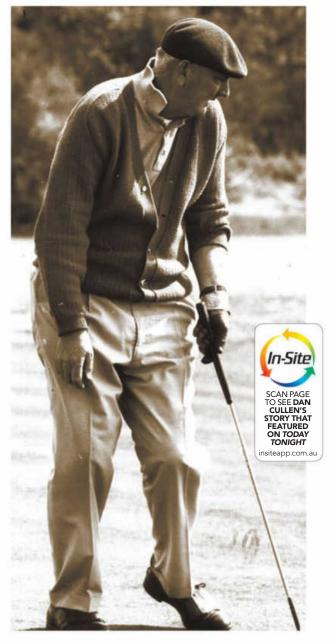
Instead, he used a piece of tree or a pipe to hone his skills during the early years.

Eventually, the proper equipment came his way, and Cullen would go on to develop a reputation as a respected club professional and capable golfer.

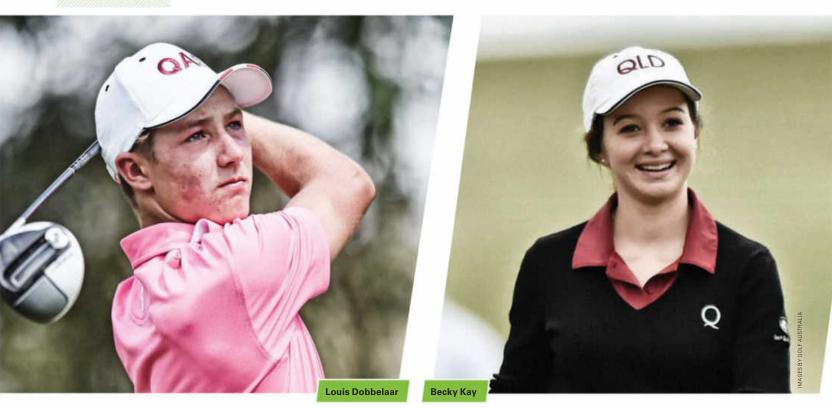
Cullen joined the PGA in 1932 after completing his traineeship at the Western Australian Golf Club, under the guidance of club professional Eric Alberts, before moving to the Cottesloe club.

In 1937 and 1938, Cullen won the West Australian Open. And in 1939, he defeated South African Bobby Locke in an exhibition match at Royal Perth Golf Club.

Cullen taught golf to thousands of people through Cullen's Driving Range, which he operated from the late 1960s next to the St Michael's club.



AUSTRALIAN **SQUADS**



Young Guns



Golf Australia Names National and Rookie Squads

hree of Australia's most prodigious young talents have been added to Golf Australia's national squad.

Queenslander Louis
Dobbelaar, West Australian Min
Woo Lee and Victorian Cameron John
have been added as junior members.

Aside from rewarding recent outstanding performances, Golf Australia high performance director Brad James said their selection would enable them to have access to more international tournaments along with increased resources and expertise to help them take the next step.

"All the national coaches agree that Louis, Min Woo and Cam have not only started to put some great results on the board, but that they each have demonstrated great development processes and the drive to push harder again," James said.

"By earning berths in the national squad, we reward them, but also encourage them to take advantage of all the teams and programs they now have at their disposal."

Dobbelaar, mentored by Cam Smith's coach Grant Field, already has an impressive resume at just 14 years old.

The Brookwater and Royal Queensland member was runner-up in the San Diego Junior Masters and US Kids World Golf Championship in 2014 when aged 12.

He won the Queensland Junior title last month and represented Australia at

the Asia Pacific Confederation Junior Championship in Taiwan in August, finishing a creditable 11th in the teams' event against competitors up to five years his senior.

Lee, 17, has made great progress in the past year.

Coached by his older sister and LPGA Tour star Minjee's mentor Ritchie Smith, Lee won the recent Aaron Baddeley Junior International Championship in San Diego, sealing his entry to this year's Emirates Australian Open at Royal Sydney.

He fired a course-record 64 against the pros to lead after the first round off the WA PGA in Kalgoorlie in October, then backed up at his





Brad James Alexandria

home course, Royal Fremantle, a week later with a T10 finish in the WA Open after being right in contention with five holes to play.

Earlier in the year, he was joint low amateur at the Spirit International in Texas.

He was the West Australian Amateur champion at Hartfield last March, then aged 16, and represented Australia in the Argentine Amateur and Copa Tailhade in Buenos Aires in November having played for WA in boys' and men's teams for the past three years.

John, 16, is coached by Tim Wendel and is part of the Rowville Secondary College high performance program.

He won the Victorian Junior Masters to start a 2015 campaign that featured success around the world and back. He was second alongside fellow national squad member Becky Kay in the Asia Pacific Confederation Junior Championship teams' event in Taiwan in August.

The Waverley and Commonwealth golf club member then went one better with victory in the 120th Argentine Amateur Championship in Buenos Aires in November and capped a stellar year with victory in the Victorian Amateur Championship.

"All three athletes have produced results at national and international

levels, which is impressive at their respective ages," James said.

respective ages," James said.

"They now have the opportunity to further their development with increased access to resources through the national program and we're confident they have the dedication to take advantage of that chance."

The trio joins Gold Coast teen Kay as junior national squad athletes, with Sydney's Cam Davis, Melbourne's Brett Coletta, Perth's Hannah Green and Wodonga's Zach Murray the 'senior' members.

A nine-strong rookie squad will benefit from Golf Australia support on the world's professional tours this year.

Former tier one squad member Ryan Ruffels has turned professional and been added to the Golf Australia rookie pro squad for 2016.

A nine-strong rookie squad will benefit from Golf Australia support on the world's professional tours this year. James announced the 2016 squad, with several new additions after a string of top amateurs turned professional in the past few months.

Of last year's six, only Queenslander Cameron Smith is not back in the squad, having effectively 'graduated' on to the US PGA Tour.

James said Smith's progression was the perfect example of how the squad hopes to work.

"Cam has advanced into a great position on one of the world's best tours—we are thrilled that we were able to help him along that path and we hope a couple more of this year's crop make the same steps in 2016," James said.

Minjee Lee and Su Oh retain their positions, as do Oliver Goss, Todd Sinnott and Australian PGA champion Nathan Holman.

Joining them are recently turned professionals Antonio Murdaca, Jarryd Felton, Ben Eccles and Ryan Ruffels.

"We are very excited by this group of athletes," James said.

"They all have access points into the world's leading pro tours and we hope they can take full advantage of the program's increased resources.

"They're all out around the globe, but it's important they continue to utilise their service teams as they develop all aspects of their games—and work through the rigours of being professional athletes."

Club Test 20 16

REVIEWS BY MICHAEL CHWASKY, MARK DEE AND ALANA JOHNSON

EDITED BY ROB SAUERHAFT

New Gear Tested and Rated

As Ben Hogan once said, "The secret is in the dirt." He could have been talking about our ClubTesters—the 40 everyday golfers who hit many thousands of shots at the World Golf Village Resort in St. Augustine, Fla., both on the range and on the course. Their two-week mission? To reveal the right sticks for your game. They had help. Our research partner, Hot Stix Golf, custom-fit each tester and used TrackMan to record reams of vital swing data. Our annual four-part ClubTest series kicks off with all you need to know about 25 brand-new drivers, divided into three categories: Better Player (most manoeuvrable), Game Improvement, and Max Game Improvement (most forgiving). Oh, and ClubTest 2016 is also online at GOLF.com, where you can see 360-degree club views, hear impact sounds and watch bonus videos. So turn the page—your new driver has arrived!

25 New Models Tested and Rated



CALLAWAY GREAT

GOLF.com/callaway

WE TESTED: 9° (adjusts 8° to 11°), 10.5° (adjusts 9.5° to 12.5°), 13.5° (adjusts 12.5° to 15.5°) with Mitsubishi Kuro Kage TiNi 50, Mitsubishi Bassara E 42, and Fujikura Speeder Evolution TS 665 graphite shafts

PROS

\\ DISTANCE: "Big" and 'Great' cover it; as long as anything tested and capable of a few 'Wow!' shots per round; this could be the hottest game-improvement driver that Callaway's produced to date.

\\ACCURACY/FORGIVENESS:

Borderline unmissable, unless vou call the first cut a miss: exceptionally forgiving—nearly the entire face hits it straight, and it controls spin really well.

\\FEEL: A light, stable, easyswinging club with a nice whip through impact—encourages you to swing for the fences; the giant sweet spot delivers a scorchinghot crack through the ball, with a rebound like a tennis racket.

\\PLAYABILITY: Real-deal, intuitive adjustability; the sliding weight lets you tweak your way into anything pre-shot—it's like having ground control for your ball; a dependable, obedient club for minor draws or fades.

\\LOOK: A sophisticated, formal appearance at address—this Bertha is red-carpet ready,

with a dark finish that sets up easily and hides its size well.

CONS

Several guys detect a distinct draw tendency when it's set up neutral; alignment aid is tough to pick out; ultralight 43-gram shaft option can lead to whippy misses, so choose wisely.

\\BOTTOM LINE: GBB is easily one of the best we tested—it flies straight and hits the hell out of the ball. Plus, you don't need an

GOLF.com/callaway

WE TESTED: 9° (adjusts 8° to 11°), 10.5° (adjusts 9.5° to 12.5°), 13.5° (adjusts 12.5° to 15.5°) with Fujikura Speeder Evolution 565 graphite shaft



Positioning more mass lower and deeper in the head increases MOI by 10 percent over last year's XR.



PROS

\\ DISTANCE: With one or two exceptions, an aerial specialist that eats up yards faster than a hungry gopher; responds well at high speeds—most testers can mash the accelerator and dig out some extra mileage; inspires a hard cut for some guys and seems to play even longer on the course.

\\ACCURACY/FORGIVENESS:

The strongest feature of one of the best tested models this year—a thump-it-straight-ahead type of club with a sweet spot the size of Texas; mis-hits get nearly a full measure—the XR's

GOLF.com/cobra

WE TESTED: 10.5° (adjusts 9° to 12°) with Matrix Red Tie 60Q4 graphite shaft

PROS

\\ DISTANCE: One of the longer clubs in the class; low-spin without being no-spin—a TrackMan darling, delivering a few memorable drives per round; a true workhorse, equal to or longer than what most guys put in play.

\\ ACCURACY/FORGIVENESS:

Straight-up straight-misses are rare and hardly noticeable; toe and heel strikes aren't just in play, they're downright impressive on their own;

controls spin all over the face to limit penalties on misses.

\\FEEL: Light, large and stable; a generous, well-balanced club—easy to move through the swing but with a mean streak at impact; the ball's just a bug on the windshield, sent off with a bright, metallic spring.

\\PLAYABILITY: The club's adjustability works as advertised, and it's surprisingly easy to use; the movable weight on the sole can totally flip trajectory from

soaring to driving, and the hosel is as effective as anything out there.

\\LOOK: Full-bodied and friendly—it looks like it might devour the ball at address; large, but not clumsy—it gives you the confidence to wail away; bonus points for the range of paint schemesthere's something for everyone looking for his inner Fowler.

CONS

It's light, and for some a little whippy—a couple of guys with



"MY IDEAL DRIVER...THIS IS A LAUNCH MACHINE."—Eric English, Handicap 10, Age 48

engineering degree to program preflight instructions. A huge range of golfers could put it in play.

"AN A++ CLUB. THIS MONSTER CRUSHES GOLF BALLS WITH A SINGLE SWING." _

Chad Johnson, Handicap 11, Age 42

Great Big Bertha comes in at 295 to 325 grams, based on the shaft weight.



looking out for you, even if you haven't found your swing.

\\FEEL: Testers give it high marks; a macho club, with good, steady heft and a spring-loaded crunch at impact; excellent balance—the shaft's a great match for the head, loading up and pouncing on the ball; doesn't draw you a map, but gives you an idea where you hit it.

\\PLAYABILITY: A naturally high flier that likes to go straight; for a few guys, light

draws and fades are in play, but it's best to let it do its thing; simple adjustments seem to get the job done.

\LOOK: The XR 16's matte finish continues to pick up fans; the tribal graphics are unique, at least, and they help centre the ball; for some, the decals seem to fade a bit after some use.

CONS

The graphics don't agree with everyone—for the bulk of our group, they're at best busy

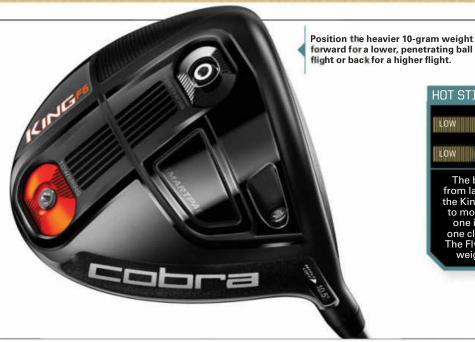
and at worst cheap; spin is a problem for a couple of guys, and a few shots get lost in the wind; most testers rate the Great Big Bertha slightly higher, but the margin is slim.

\\BOTTOM LINE: A bringyour-lunch-pail sort of driver that seems to churn out impressive, straight-ahead distance every time you tee it up. High launch, ample forgiveness and an extra gear make the new XR an effective option for anyone who just wants to step up and slug it.



quicker tempos struggle to keep things in line; one or two testers have trouble squaring up the big head; some actually miss the bright orange head.

\BOTTOM LINE: A tester favourite. The King F6 features enough forgiveness for high-handicappers to enjoy and enough fun for more discerning players to tinker with—it combines last year's Fly Z and Z+ in one easy-swinging package.



HOT STIX TAKE

LAUNCH

LOW MID HIGH

SPIN

LOW MID HIGH

The biggest change from last year's Fly-Z to the King F6 is the ability to move two weights, one in the back and one closer to the face. The Fly-Z had only one weight in the rear.

GOLF.com/mizuno

WE TESTED: 10.5° (adjusts 8.5° to 12.5°) with Fujikura Six XLR8 and Fujikura Motore Speeder Tour Spec graphite shafts

PROS

\\DISTANCE: Top-shelf—as long or longer than what nearly everyone has in the bag; for a few guys, the thing's a rocket launcher; even finicky testers trust it to swing for the fences.

\\ACCURACY/FORGIVENESS:

Might be its number-one feature; doesn't give up much distance—it's tough to call misses 'missed'; takes the edge off hooks and slices; with the right settings, it's dead straight and well trained—it runs away from trouble.

\\FEEL: Really rewarding through the swing; the stock shafts provide a full kick into the ball, and the beefy, headheavy setup is unyielding on off-centre contact; might be Mizuno's best effort yet.

\\PLAYABILITY: An intuitive weight scheme—repositioning the screw creates obvious changes in ball flight that improve dispersion, even taking an entire side of the course out of play; controllable, mid-high trajectory; don't think too much—just aim and fire.

\\LOOK: A soft grey finish, black face and high-tech sole create a mix of subtle and loud; large head size generates added confidence—it's ready to mash the ball.

CONS

Most complaints are aesthetic: It's loud enough to wake the children, and the tribal graphics in the crown have got to go; a few guys say the Six XLR8 shaft feels too light with this clubhead—they'd swap it out for a heavier option.

GOLF.com/nike

WE TESTED: 10.5° (adjusts 8.5° to 12.5°) with Mitsubishi Diamana S+ Blue Board 60 graphite shaft



The now-familiar cavity-back design helps increase MOI for added head stability on mis-hits.

\\DISTANCE: Serves up pretty decent yardage, particularly for fast swingers who need lower altitude and a few less RPMs off the tee; fires off flat screamers that hit the ground running; adding loft is a must to get acceptable results.

\\ACCURACY/ FORGIVENESS: Accuracy is its best attribute; for a majority of testers, it's stupid straight, with little to

PING G GOLF.com/ping

WE TESTED: 9° (adjusts 8° to 10°), 10.5° (adjusts 9.5° to 11.5°) with Ping Alta 55 graphite shaft



PROS

\\ DISTANCE: A boomer, baby—and it doesn't really matter where you catch it; big carry numbers with drives that launch high and stay there; super consistent—a high-ceiling club with a high floor to match—what more could you want?

\\ACCURACY/FORGIVENESS:

The best—maybe ever; so straight it's almost boring; the entire face is the sweet spot, and heel/toe misses are basically absolved.

\\FEEL: A long, light club that still manages impressive balance; Gibraltar-stable, with a slight consoling nod to misses; a great, resounding whack at impact—like smashing a mailbox with a metal bat, as one rambunctious fan put it.

\\ PLAYABILITY: A point-andshoot golf club—just play it straight and smile; a natural

high-flier that manages to keep its head in the wind; really doesn't ask a lot of its operator, and it's as lowstress as a driver can be.

\\LOOK: The standout matte black G looks like a tool from Batman's belt; most guys actually go for the raised turbulators, and even for the enormous footprint: it looks easy to aim and impossible to miss—which is about right, come to think of it.



OOKS GREAT, FEELS GREAT, WORKS GREAT—NO WONDER THEY NAMED IT.' IT'S HARD TO DING THIS PING."—Kevin Kehoe, Handicap 18, Age 54

NBOTTOM LINE: 'Sneaky good' might sound like backhanded praise, but from our testers it's full-on gushing. A huge step up for Mizuno; it can go toeto-toe with the big guns. Its blend of length and leniency places the new EZ among this year's best offerings.



-Jeff Delfs, Handicap 10, Age 36



To increase MOI, the head is longer from heel to toe and front to back than its predecessor.



no curve; the lower ball flight holds its course in the wind.

\\FEEL: A tight, dense thwack at impact—more muted than metallic, almost wooden; good balance and stability make it easy to catch the sweet spot.

\\PLAYABILITY: The Vapor Fly Pro is possibly the lowest-launching driver in the Game Improvement category; it prefers straight lines, but a few panellists can create all the shots an ambitious mid-handicapper might need;

simple to adjust, and the results are plain to see.

\LOOK: Flashy and overall polarising, but high marks for originality—there's nothing else that looks like this one; a bunch of guys like the blue finish; a smallish, traditional head shape with a lot of fans; overall, in line with Nike's core focus: a modern, athletic look.

CONS

Unless you have enough swing speed and spin to wake this

one up (think Rory), it won't wow you with distance; for some guys, the feedback is a little mushy and abrupt; the blue finish has at least as many detractors as it does fans—it's definitely loud, and to some, obnoxious.

\\BOTTOM LINE: If you're looking to knock off some backspin and go for futuristic, rave-ready styling, the Vapor Fly Pro driver could be a good fit. It's probably best for longer hitters looking to find a few more fairways.

HOT STIX TAKE

in the same of the	LAUNCH	
LOW	MID	HIGH
	SPIN	
LOW	MID	HIGH

At address, the clubhead sits slightly open with less visual loft. It hits shots marginally higher than last year's Vapor Pro. Yet it's still a relatively low-launching head aimed at faster swingers who need to keep flight down.

CONS

For a few, the shaft's a little long, the crown's too busy, and the soaring flight's...um... too straight. If you can deal with that, and aren't after Rube Goldberg adjustability, there's not much to complain about.

\\BOTTOM LINE: Is this better than the G30? Parsing out the difference is more like splitting atoms than hairs, but who cares? It's long, straight and looks mean as hell. The testers' choice for driver of the year in the Game Improvement class works for just about anybody.



TAYLORMADE GOLF.com/taylormade

WE TESTED: 9.5° (adjusts 7.5° to 11.5°), 10.5° (adjusts 8.5° to 12.5°), 12° HL (adjusts 10° to 14°) with Fujikura Pro 50 and Pro 60 graphite shafts



PROS

\\ DISTANCE: When everything clicks into place, the M2 can be an absolute missile launcher, among the longest out thereone or two shots per round will have the grillroom talking; the flat, low-spin ball flight generates a nice blend of carry and roll; this one does a good job of maintaining ball speeds across the face on mis-hits.

\\ACCURACY/FORGIVENESS:

The M2 finds its fair share of fairways; works well for more consistent swingers. **\\FEEL:** Muted, almost ceramic sensation—the face seems to absorb the ball with barely a whisper on pure strikes and little more on misses; very light through the swing; some guys find it feels a bit better than previous carbon-fibre heads.

\\PLAYABILITY: Shoots a barrage of relatively low bullets—a linksland special that keeps backspin in check; hosel allows for some adjustments, which helps with fitting.

\\LOOK: Two-tone black and white head has some fierce supporters—its leap-forward scheme jumps off the rack; the carbon-fibre looks cool, and the contrast sets up a clear visual over the ball; testers like the black finish on the face—it works like impact tape, so you can see where you strike it.

CONS

The lightish clubhead can be tough to track during the swing, which leads to squirrelly contact; the look is polarising,



WE TESTED: 9.5° (adjusts 8.75° to 11°), 10.5° (adjusts 9.75° to 12°), 12° (adjusts 11.25° to 13.5°) with Aldila Rogue Black 70 and Silver 60. as well as Mitsubishi Diamana D+ White 70, S+ Blue 60, and M+ Red 50 graphite shafts



"LONG, BABY, LONG!"

-Ed Inderbitzin, Handicap 11, Age 48



PROS

\\ DISTANCE: Should keep up with your gamer; for some, the D2 has an extra gearit's capable of a few bombs every round; takes a minute to fine-tune, since the hosel has a real effect on distance.

\\ACCURACY/FORGIVENESS:

Nothing's changed here—it's still Titleist's most forgiving driver to date, which puts it on par with most in its class; a rare,

The hosel adjustability contributes to the club's unmatched playability.



WE TESTED: 10° (adjusts 9° to 11°), 12° (adjusts 11° to 13°) with Matrix White Tie 55X4 and Red Tie 65Q4 graphite shafts

PROS

\\DISTANCE: The Exotics EX9's natural draw tendency helps some testers eke out a few more yards; it's easy to adjust your way into slightly better results.

\\ACCURACY/ FORGIVENESS: A pretty straight shooter, with good lateral forgiveness for a stocky head; many guys find it's predictable but not totally corrective; noticeable draw bias can take the right side out of play—and the sting out of your slice.

\\FEEL: A smooth, mediumweight club that's easy to get moving; lively, loud soundannounces impact to your entire foursome (and beyond); the EX9 is stable, with few twists or tweaks at impact.

\\PLAYABILITY: No single trajectory to talk about—the Exotics EX9 does different things for different guys; one thing you can count on is a natural draw bias, although fades aren't impossible; the hosel packs a nice range of adjustability and can be made to fit many different swings.

\\LOOK: Its strongest asset—a player's look with a deep, stout-faced setup and time-honoured shape; simple, conservative and composed over the ball—the EX9 isn't flashy, but it makes you feel like you'll hit it solid.

CONS

As far as overall distance, it's just an average performer for some testers; the EX9 is prone to the odd card-killing hook; the ear-splitting, high-pitched sound at impact is difficult to ignore; a few players

Spider

and some testers are slow to warm up to it; a few panellists expect more directional forgiveness—it hits for power more than average.

\\BOTTOM LINE: In the right hands, with the right swing, the M2 can launch it a long way. That'll most likely be lower-handicappers, or those players after long-drive bragging rights. It's better than last year's AeroBurner, but many testers say the same thing: Pay up and try its big brother, the M1.

Weight saved by using a carbon crown gets redistributed low and rearward, increasing MOI.



LAUNCH
LOW MID HIGH
SPIN
LOW MID HIGH

The M2 is one of the lowerspinning clubs in the Game
Improvement category. It's
very forgiving on misses
in terms of distance.
And we're glad to see
TaylorMade bring back
the adjustable hosel
(AeroBurner didn't have it).

totally neutral Game Improvement driver with impressive accuracy; predictable sidespin seems to correct course midair.

\\FEEL: One of the best at impact; catch it flush and the ball basically disappears—it just vaporises the thing; a gentle giant that tells you where you hit it with a delicate tingle on misses; zero twists or turns—a nice, compressed blast.

\\PLAYABILITY: No other Game Improvement driver comes close; enough manoeuverability to appeal to low-handicappers,

while nearly everyone can bend mild shapes to fit the hole; the adjustable hosel sets you up for success—once dialled in, you'll know exactly where to find your ball after takeoff.

\LOOK: This one sets the standard—nothing better in the bunch; it's the Town Car of drivers: long and black, classic and comfortable; the simple alignment aid does its job.

CONS

The 915 D2 is more interested in giving you options than in saving

your bacon—if you can't make consistent contact, there are better clubs for you; a few testers find impact surprisingly loud and high-pitched—not what most associate with Titleist drivers.

\\BOTTOM LINE: One of the better models tested. Same as last year: the everyman's Titleist, a great all-around club that holds up in an increasingly crowded Game Improvement category. Few drivers in any class blend a timeless look with tight handling this well.

HOT STIX TAKE LAUNCH LOW MID HIGH SPIN LOW MID HIGH You'd be mistaken to think it's for better players only—this driver is built for all skill levels. The sole channel improves ball

speeds on low hits.

find that it sets up with a slightly closed clubface.

\\BOTTOM LINE: This bluecollar club does the job but doesn't stand out in any one category. The EX9's no-frills look and performance should appeal to traditionalists, who may prefer it to an old-school slice-buster.

> The updated face design combines with a narrower, more flexible sole channel to increase power on low misses.





WE TESTED: 9° (adjusts 8° to 11°), 10.5° (adjusts 9.5° to 12.5°) with Aldila Rogue I/O 60 graphite shaft

PROS

\\DISTANCE: The 816 Double Black Diamond is one of the longest clubs; a bomber for a few guys-10 yards longer than their gamers; offcentre hits are within a few yards of your good ones.

\\ACCURACY/FORGIVENESS:

One of the top-rated models: extremely accurate—you can have an off day and still find almost every fairway; toe and heel shots make their way back toward the fairway.

\\FEEL: Testers give it very high marks; impact is springy, and there's a definite difference between centre and mis-hits; very hot sensation in the middle of the face and never harsh on misses; stable at impact virtually no twisting or turning.

\\PLAYABILITY: A true performer—it'll do whatever you tell it to do with a bit of added flair: working the ball is simple—never a problem turning it over for draws or holding it off for fades; easy to alter trajectory; the removable Gravity Core rod fine-tunes shot shape and spin rate.

\LOOK: The absolute favourite; compact, all-black look says 'player'; lines up perfectly behind the ball and makes you feel like you'll smoke it.



"VERY RESPONSIVE AND SURPRISINGLY EASY TO HIT. THE BEST COMBO OF DISTANCE AND ADJUSTABILITY OUT THERE."—Zach Fasman, Handicap 9, Age 67

GOLF.com/callaway

WE TESTED: 9° (adjusts 8° to 11°) with Fujikura Evolution II TS 665 graphite shaft







WE TESTED: 10.5° (adjusts 9° to 12°) with King F6 Matrix Black Tie 65 M4 graphite shaft



PROS

\\DISTANCE: Once dialled in, the King F6+ gives our testers what they need off the tee-it's a pretty long hitter capable of producing the occasional bomb, too.

\\ACCURACY/FORGIVENESS:

Negligible drop-off in distance on mis-hits; shots struck on the heel or toe want to go straight and fly nice and far.

\\FEEL: The ball jumps off the face with plenty of feedback to let you know how and where

you hit it; for most guys, a satisfying sound and sensation at impact—not too loud or dull.

\\PLAYABILITY: Works the ball either way guite nicely and on a good trajectory; a few panellists find that their shots soar a little higher than they do with other drivers, but still a boring shot; no problem turning it over for a power draw; the sliding sole weight effectively fine-tunes your trajectory.

\LOOK: The head shape looks good from above—the

large footprint from front to back and the deep clubface instill confidence; most testers like the colour options—grey with green accents (at right), black with bright orange accents, white and blue.

CONS

It doesn't produce quite the sound and feel that a few guys look for; the colour schemes don't move the needle for everyone; even with adjustments, the flight is higher than one or two prefer. The various adjustability options can be too confusing for a few testers; sticker shock is a real possibility.

\\BOTTOM LINE: The top-rated model in the better player category. The Big Bertha Alpha 816 Double Black Diamond can seemingly do it all—it's top-shelf all the way.



Change the CG (and ball flight) based on how you orient the heavy end of the 12-gram rod.



PROS

\\ DISTANCE: The XR Pro offers good pop; slightly longer on solid strikes than many testers' current sticks; for some, it's not quite as long as the Alpha 816 DBD but still respectable.

\\ ACCURACY/

FORGIVENESS: Does a nice job minimising distance loss on slight misses; no problem hitting fairways—a straight shooter; shots off the heel and toe stay in play on par with what most guys expect.

\\FEEL: One of the best sticks in the better-player category; it has a light but satisfying sensation at impact; never jarring, even on relatively poor contact; stable and rock solid through the ball.

\\PLAYABILITY: It's fairly easy to move the ball in both directions on centre hits; shots pierce through the wind while maintaining good carry; a mid-trajectory is the norm.

\LOOK: An appearance any golfer should appreciate—the compact clubhead has a classic

shape with a matte black finish and a useful alignment aid.

CONS

A few testers need a bit more directional forgiveness; the raised areas on the crown don't appeal to all of the guys; one or two find that it's not quite as long as the biggest hitters.

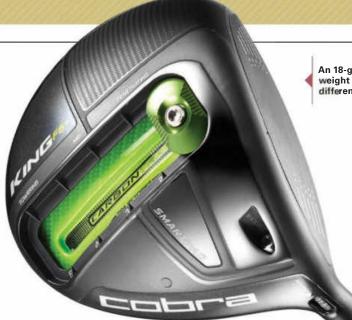
\\BOTTOM LINE: The XR Pro is one of the stronger all-around performers. Being cheaper than the Alpha 816 DBD, it'll get plenty of looks.

HOT STIX TAKE



This one's slightly more forgiving than last year's XR Pro. It has a deeper face, which improves performance on both high and low misses.

\\BOTTOM LINE: King F6+ is solid across the board. A sliding weight and adjustable hosel present lots of opportunities to lock in your best specs.



An 18-gram sliding weight provides five different CG settings.

LAUNCH LOW MID HIGH SPIN LOW MID HIGH The King F6+ is a relatively low-spinning, forgiving driver. A sliding front-to-back weight is very effective when dialing in launch and spin.

HOT STIX TAKE



WE TESTED: 10.5° (adjusts 9° to 12°) with King LTD Aldila Rogue Black 60 graphite shaft

PROS

\\DISTANCE: It can really knock your ball a country mile—longer than some guys' own clubs and many of the test models; booms the ball, with lots of roll.

\\ACCURACY/FORGIVENESS:

The King LTD is one of the stronger performers in this category—consistent with minimal distance loss on heel and toe shots; dependably straight, even when you miss a bit; in terms of distance

and direction, does a solid job correcting shots that fail to find the sweet spot.

\\FEEL: Nice, balanced weight makes it easy to swing through; minimal twisting and vibration on all shots, even those struck away from the centre of the face; a good loud crack at impact lets you know how well you hit it.

\\PLAYABILITY: Testers are confident that they can manipulate the ball in either

direction for a gentle draw or fade; a medium-low trajectory with a nice boring flight.

\\LOOK: Strong and muscular at address, with a simple alignment aid; clean, understated black crown; there's nothing quite like the window built into the sole.

cons

Some find that it favours faster swingers who generate lots

GOLF.com/nike

WE TESTED: 10.5" (adjusts 8.5° to 12.5°) with Mitsubishi Diamana S+ Limited 60 graphite shaft





\\ DISTANCE: Good contact puts a shorter club in your hands for your second shot; the lively clubface catapults the ball down the fairway; overall distance seems to be about the same as many guys' regular clubs; placing the removable weight pod with the heavier end in the rear helps increase launch and distance.

The pod in the rear is used to tweak CG and ball flight.

GOLF.com/ping

WE TESTED: 9° (adjusts 8° to 10°), 10.5° (adjusts 9.5° to 11.5°) with Ping Alta 55 graphite shaft



PROS

\\ DISTANCE: One of the biggest hitters in the category; it's the G30 on steroidslaunches shots that seem to stay in the air forever; maintains distance when you miss the centre of the face.

\\ACCURACY/FORGIVENESS:

Its greatest strength—head of the class; huge amount of playable real estate on the clubface makes it a breeze to hit; how can you not love a driver that just finds fairway after fairway?

\\FEEL: The big face lets you know if you've hit it solidly; the ball explodes off the clubface as if it's powered by TNT; lots of pop at impact without being overly loud or jarring on misses.

\\PLAYABILITY: The adjustable hosel allows testers to dial up their desired shot shape; lower than average ball flight that's great for windy conditions.

\\LOOK: Classy matte black finish seems to shrink the sizable head; turbulators on the crown look cool and work well as an effective

alignment aid; a broad clubhead from front to back inspires tons of confidence at address.

CONS

The spin rates and launch are a little low for moderate speed swingers; for some testers, it doesn't generate the most rewarding feel at impact; turbulators on the crown don't look great to everyone.

\\BOTTOM LINE: One of the top drivers tested. It's a strong replacement for its predecessor, the big-hitting G30 LS Tec.

of spin; others consider the 'Space Port' gimmicky; overall feel doesn't agree with a couple of guys.

\\BOTTOM LINE: The King LTD driver provides plenty of high-end performance, especially for our highspin players. The club also offers a "window" into possible future designs.



A lightweight carbon-fibre crown saves weight that's used to increase the club's MOI.

HOT STIX TAKE LAUNCH LOW MID HIGH SPIN LOW MID HIGH An extremely lowlaunching, low-spinning head for players who generate too much spin. Offers ample forgiveness, too.

\\ACCURACY/FORGIVENESS:

Fairly easy to control off the tee; serviceable forgiveness—shots want to go straight as long as you hit them on the good part of the face.

\\FEEL: Well-balanced, with plenty of heft in the head; muted feel at impact but still a pleasing sensation; despite the smaller head size, it's stable, with little twisting through the ball.

\\PLAYABILITY: A consistent, low trajectory that cuts through

the wind with ease and can produce a hefty amount of rollout; low spin rates allow for some movement, but it typically flies straight; the Vapor Flex 440 is better for playing fades than draws.

\LOOK: Compact, traditional shape sets up well behind the ball and aligns easily; blue and black sections on the crown form an unusual but functional visual aid; a radically different colour scheme makes it stand out from the pack.

CONS

Not nearly enough launch or spin for a number of testers; lacks forgiveness compared with most of its peers; colour scheme and multimaterial head turn some guys off.

\\BOTTOM LINE: There's a lot of adjustability in a club aimed at better players with faster swings who need very low spin rates to max out distance.

HOT STIX TAKE

LAUNCH				
LOW	MID	HIGH		
SPIN				
LOW	MID	HIGH		
A low-launching				

A low-launching, low-spinning 440 cc head with composite construction that's just a little bit easier to hit than last year's Vapor Flex driver.

The low-spin head produces 350 rpm less backspin than the standard G driver.

"I HIT SOME OF MY LONGEST, STRAIGHTEST DRIVES EVER."

—Chris Klamkin, Handicap 2, Age 31





WE TESTED: 9.5° (adjusts 7.5° to 11.5°), 10.5° (adjusts 8.5° to 12.5°) with Aldila Rogue Silver 70, Fujikura Pro 60 and Mitsubishi Kuro Kage TiNi Silver 60 graphite shafts



PROS

\\ DISTANCE: A true standout—one of the longest drivers in the test; five to 10 yards longer than many testers' normal drivers, even on slight misses; longer than you deserve in both carry and roll.

\\ACCURACY/FORGIVENESS:

Among the highest-rated models; very easy to hit straight; noticeably more forgiving than the SLDR and R15; slight misses find fairways with regularity.

\\FEEL: Top-shelf at impact; springs off the face with the speed of a rocket; a quiet thud you'd expect from a composite head, but still very rewardingimpact sensation makes you want to hit it again and again.

\\PLAYABILITY: This club can do it all—the most playable model we tried; draws and fades are equally easy if you've got the talent; shots never balloon, and they carry for miles.

\\LOOK: A tester favourite; among the most attractive sticks on the market; the black composite section mixed with the white shelf creates a nice contrast that actually helps align the club at address.

CONS

Thin contact loses more distance than some would prefer; a few testers aren't crazy about the muted feel; the black-andwhite colour combination doesn't thrill everyone.



WE TESTED: 9.5° (adjusts 8.75° to 11°), 10.5° (adjusts 9.75° to 12°) with Aldila Rogue Black 70 and Silver 60, as well as Mitsubishi Diamana D+ White 70 and S+ Blue 60 graphite shafts





GOLF.com/touredge

WE TESTED: 9° (adjusts 8° to 10°) with Aldila Rogue Silver 60 graphite shaft

\\ DISTANCE: This club is in the same ballpark as most normal gamers; guys don't lose too much distance on slight mis-hits; it can be sneaky long when you catch it just right; ample roll leads to solid yardage overall.

\\ ACCLIBACY/ FORGIVENESS: The Exotics EX9 Tour can keep you out of trouble when you deserve to

be in jail; adequate correction when testers miss the centre of the clubface.

\\FEEL: It gives you a stable, strong sensation through the ball without much twisting; the head tracks nicely throughout the swing; for the most part, not overly jarring or harsh on minor misses.

\\PLAYABILITY: The club produces a repeatable, medium flight; controllable-

testers can move shots in either direction with the right swing, but it basically wants to go straight; if anything, testers find it's easier to shape fades than draws; the adjustable hosel helps to tweak flight.

\\ LOOK: The EX9 Tour features a pleasant shape and face height that most players appreciate; the paint job has a sparkly quality to it—overall, a high-end look.

\\BOTTOM LINE: One of

THE M1 IS LONG AND STRONG AND SURPRISINGLY FORGIVING."

> —Dan Zegura, Handicap 5, Age 50



A sliding 15-gram weight along the heel-toe track gives up to 25 yards of draw/fade bias.

HOT STIX TAKE LAUNCH LOW MIO HIGH SPIN LOW MID HIGH

Two sliding sole weights allow for a tremendous amount of flight tuning. Don't be afraid to move both weights to one channel. This low-spin, composite head is a little more forgiving than the R15, too.

PROS

NDISTANCE: The 915 D3 does its job nicely, even if it isn't a total masher; fairly long on centre hits—about the same as testers expect from their current clubs; it gets the ball deep enough for standard-length par 4s; maintains acceptable distance on heel and toe shots.

\\ACCURACY/FORGIVENESS:

Provides what you'd expect—enough help to keep poor swings in play but not always enough to keep shots in the fairway.

\\FEEL: Near-perfect balance and weighting make it a joy to swing time and again; extremely solid, a true Titleist; centre hits feel lovely—the balls come off with some heat.

\\PLAYABILITY: Typical, repeatable flight with the 915 D3 is a penetrating trajectory that pierces the wind; lower trajectory than some other models but plenty of runout; testers can move shots around with relative ease.

\\LOOK: Definitely one of the best; what a driver should

look like, period; the compact head and black finish are just about perfect—guys would be proud to carry it in their bag.

CONS

It can be less forgiving than testers would like; goodenough distance, but it doesn't blow away the guys who have massive overall length.

\\BOTTOM LINE: The 915 D3 is a very competent carryover from 2015. With plenty of adjustability features, it holds its own in a competitive market.

HOT STIX TAKE

LAUNCH			
LOW	MID	HIGH	
	SPIN		
LOW	MID	HIGH	
ALIXANTA NON			

The 915 D3 is more forgiving than the 913 D3 it replaced. The pearshaped head has a deep face that's slightly open at address, which gives it a traditional look. It's lower-launching and lower-spinning than most, with great workability.

CONS

Forgiveness on mis-hits isn't on the same level as some other models; not overly impressive in the distance department; the glittery paint job bothers a few players.

\\BOTTOM LINE: The EX9 Tour is a solid performer that provides predictable results without wowing anyone.



HOT STIX TAKE

LAUNCH
LOW MID HIGH

SPIN
LOW MID HIGH

The compact, 430 cc head has a deeper face for more forgiveness on shots struck high or low of centre.
The interchangeable swingweight screw allows for a more precise build.



WE TESTED: 9° (adjusts 8° to 11°) and 10.5° (adjusts 9.5° to 12.5°) with Mitsubishi Fubuki Z 50 shaft

PROS

NDISTANCE: The FG Tour F5 delivers yardages off the tee that are similar to those achieved with testers' regular weapons; adequate distance, for the most part, but it can drop a few bombs if you nail the centre of the face; misses travel reasonably far, even those struck low on the face.

\\ ACCURACY/ FORGIVENESS: This driver is a straight-shooter that will help get you in the short grass; low spin rates minimise dispersion surprisingly well.

\\FEEL: The head has a weighty sensation throughout the swing; soft pop at impact that's quiet yet satisfying to some testers; the ball seems to jump off the clubface with ample speed.

\\PLAYABILITY: Produces a higher trajectory than expected from a deep-faced

club; repeatable ball flight medium high and pretty darn straight; draws and fades can be shaped gently but big movement isn't so easy.

\LOOK: An attractive clubhead without a lot of distracting graphics; sits nice and square behind the ball and is easy to aim; shiny black paint job is one of Wilson's best in some time.

HT AND LEFT: COURTESY WILSON STAFI

THE HIT MEN

BARRY FASENMYER

Handicap +2 Age 52
Height 5'11" Weight 88 kg
Occupation Managing partner

CURRENT DRIVER:
Ball flight High draw
Ball speed (mph) 157
Launch angle (deg.) 13.8
Spin rate (rpm) 3,032
Total distance (yards) 268



JON DOBBERSTEIN

Handicap 5 Age 47
Height 5'10" Weight 102 kg
Occupation Project manager

CURRENT DRIVER:
Ball flight Low draw
Ball speed (mph) 161
Launch angle (deg.) 10.8
Spin rate (rpm) 2,381
Total distance (yards) 311



DORSEY GRAY

Handicap 7
Height 5'11"
Weight 79 kg.
Occupation Mortgage banker.
CURRENT DRIVER:

Ball flight Low straight Ball speed (mph) 132 Launch angle (deg.) 10.8 Spin rate (rpm) 2,519 Total distance (yards) 235



MARK BARRETTE

Handicap 8 Age 44
Height 6'3" Weight 98 kg
Occupation Relocation manager
CURRENT DRIVER:

Ball flight Medium draw Ball speed (mph) 155 Launch angle (deg.) 13.2 Spin rate (rpm) 3,135 Total distance (yards) 264



ZACH FASMAN

Handicap 9 Age 67
Height 5'8" Weight 86 kg
Occupation AttorneyY.
CURRENT ORIVER:

Ball flight Low straight Ball speed (mph) 136 Launch angle (deg.) 9.1 Spin rate (rpm) 2,048 Total distance (vards) 228



CHRIS KLAMKIN

Handicap 2 Age 31 Height 5'9" Weight 95 kg Occupation Entrepreneur.

CURRENT DRIVER:
Ball flight Medium draw
Ball speed (mph) 160
Launch angle (deg.) 8.8
Spin rate (rpm) 2,926
Total distance (yards) 264



DAN ZEGURA

Handicap 5 Age 50
Height 6'4" Weight 98 kg
Occupation Attorney.

CURRENT DRIVER:
Rall flight Medium draw

Ball flight Medium draw Ball speed (mph) 152 Launch angle (deg.) 10.9 Spin rate (rpm) 3,432 Total distance (yards) 256



PATRICK KENNEDY

Handicap 7 Age 47
Height 5'7" Weight 68 kg.
Occupation Technology manager
CURRENT DRIVER:

Ball flight Medium fade Ball speed (mph) 134 Launch angle (deg.) 15.7 Spin rate (rpm) 1,836 Total distance (yards) 249



ALEX HSI

Handicap 8 Age 38
Height 5'10" Weight 102 kg
Occupation VP, sales/marketing
CURRELIT DRIVER:
Ball flight High draw

Ball speed (mph) 145 Launch angle (deg.) 14.3 Spin rate (rpm) 1,828 Total distance (yards) 267



JEFF DELFS

Handicap 10 Age 36 Height 16 2* Weight 116 kg Occupation IT project manager Ball flight Low draw Ball speed (mph) 159 Launch angle (deg.) 6.4 Spin rate (rpm) 2,864 Total distance (vards) 264



LEE NEISLER

Handicap 3 Age 52
Height 5'10" Weight 84 kg
Occupation Finance
CURRENT DRIVER:

Bedland on the state of the sta



MICHAEL KAYE

Handicap 6 Age 58
Height 6"1" Weight 79 kg.
Occupation Engineer



DOUG LAIR

Handicap 7 Age 57
Height 5'9" Weight 77 kg
Occupation Stay-at-home dad
CURRENT DRIVER:

Ball flight Medium-low straigh Ball speed (mph) 136 Launch angle (deg.) 13.0 Spin rate (rpm) 2,152 Total distance (yards) 238



JEFF MCKINNEY

Handicap 9 Age 55
Height 6'2" Weight 102 kg
Occupation Police officer
CURRENT DRIVER:
Rall flight Medium draw

Ball flight Medium draw Ball speed (mph) 147 Launch angle (deg.) 11.3 Spin rate (rpm) 2,605 Total distance (yards) 265



ERIC ENGLISH

Handicap 10 Age 48
Height 6'2" Weight 116 kg
Occupation Police officer
CURRENT DRIVER:
Ball flight Low draw

Ball flight Low draw
Ball speed (mph) 146
Launch angle (deg.) 8.7
Spin rate (rpm) 3,458
Total distance (yards) 231



DREW ISAACMAN

Handicap 4 Age 49 Height 5'10" Weight 77 kg Occupation Owner, furniture refinishing co

CURRENT DRIVER:
Ball flight Medium draw
Ball speed (mph) 140
Launch angle (deg.) 14.3
Spin rate (rpm) 2,148
Total distance (yards) 23



GREG SUTTON

Handicap 6 Age 52
Height 5'10" Weight 82 kg.
Occupation Sales director, insurance

Ball flight Low draw Ball speed (mph) 151 Launch angle (deg.) 8.8 Spin rate (rpm) 3,539 Total distance (yards) 270



ROBERT REX RECORD

Handicap 7 Age 41
Height 5'8" Weight 68 kg
Occupation Physician/Pastor
CURRENT DRIVER:

Ball flight Medium draw Ball speed (mph) 153 Launch angle (deg.) 12.3 Spin rate (rpm) 2,159 Total distance (yards) 278



JACK RECORD

Handicap 9 Age 40
Height 5'11' Weight 113 kg
Occupation Owner, software company
CURRENT DRIVER:
Rall flight Low fade

Ball flight Low tade
Ball speed (mph) 139
Launch angle (deg.) 12.1
Spin rate (rpm) 2,322
Total distance (yards) 251



KIRK FISCHER

Launch angle (deg.) 11.2

Total distance (yards) 22

Snin rate (rnm) 2 735

Handicap 10

Height 5'11'

Weight 77 kg.

Occupation College professor

Cubert Toriver:

Ball flight Medium draw

Ball speed (mph) 128





The interchangeable sole weight screw-which comes in 3, 7 or 11 grams-helps alter backspin.



Beating balls by day, filling out questionnaires by night. Ahh, the life of a ClubTester! Not your idea of a good time? Well, these 40 fellows are obsessed with gear. And although they know all about spin rate, this is a no-spin zone: You get unvarnished, nuanced expert opinions, all to help you find the right driver. Here's more on our merry band, along with TrackMan data (courtesy of Hot Stix Golf fitters) on each guy's current driver. See you next month, when our crew takes a swing at the newest irons.

RANDY ROCHEFORT

CONS

a standout in any

category; muted

impact feel isn't

as rewarding as

like; panellists

want more bigtime distance.

Handican 10 Weight 98 kg. Occupation Power-grid coordinator

Ball flight High fade Ball speed (mph) 169 Launch angle (deg.) 12.1 Spin rate (rpm) 3,17 Total distance (yards) 303



HOAI HOANG

Handicap 12 Weight 73 kg. Occupation Attorney CURRENT DRIVER: Ball flight High straight Ball speed (mph) 148



ERIC JACK

Handicap 13 Height 5'10" Weight 113 kg. Occupation CPA CURRENT DRIVER:

Ball flight Low fade Ball speed (mph) 124 Launch angle (deg.) 6.6 Spin rate (rpm) 2,965 Total distance (vards) 186



RICH BERNSTEIN

Handican 15 Weight 91 kg Occupation Retired admin. director CURRENT DRIVER: Ball flight Medium-low draw

Ball speed (mph) 129 Launch angle (deg.) 12.6 Total distance (vards) 212

J.P. SAULNIER

Handicap 19 Weight 88 kg Occupation Attorney CURRENT DRIVER: Ball flight Low fade

Ball speed (mph) 150 Launch angle (deg.) 7.8 Spin rate (rpm) 3,185 Total distance (vards) 240



ED INDERBITZIN

Handicap 1 Weight 75 kg Height 5" Occupation Sales manager, dairy distribution

Ball flight High draw Ball speed (mph) 150 Launch angle (deg.) 10.8 Spin rate (rpm) 1,9 Total distance (yards) 257



MICHAEL JO

Launch angle (deg.) 11.5

Total distance (vards) 254

Handicap 12 Age 41 Height 5'9 Weight 98 kg. Occupation Attorney CURRENT DRIVER: Ball flight Medium straight Ball speed (mph) 131 Launch angle (deg.) 11.9 Spin rate (rpm) 2,470 Total distance (yards) 227



CHARLES BROWN

Handicap 14 Weight 102 kg Height 5'8' Occupation Director CURRENT DRIVER: Ball flight Medium draw Ball speed (mph) 145 Launch angle (deg.) 11.4 Spin rate (rpm) 2,5

Total distance (yards) 257



DON YTTERBERG

Handicap 15 **Age** 59 Height 6 Weight 107 kg Occupation CEO, metal plating co. CURRENT DRIVER:

Ball flight Low draw Ball speed (mph) 137 Launch angle (deg.) 7.7 Spin rate (rpm) 3,101 Total distance (yards) 232



DAVID SULLIVAN

Handicap 21 Height 5'10 Weight 75 kg Occupation First Tee coach CURRENT DRIVER: Ball flight Medium fade Ball speed (mph) 122 Launch angle (deg.) 13.0 Spin rate (rpm) 3



CHAD JOHNSON

Handicap 11 Weight 82 kg Heiaht 6'2 Occupation College professor CURRENT DRIVER:

Ball flight High draw Ball speed (mph) 146 Launch angle (deg.) 12.1 Spin rate (rpm) 4.133 Total distance (vards) 225



MIKE ROYNAN

Handicap 12 **Age** 45 Weight 79 kg Heiaht 5'11 Occupation Attorney CURRENT DRIVER: Rall flinht I nw draw



OWEN DAHL

Handicap 14 $\mathsf{Age}\,45$ Weight 73 kg. Height 5'8" Occupation Financial analyst CURRENT DRIVER:

Ball flight Medium draw Ball speed (mph) 141 Launch angle (deg.) 9.9 Spin rate (rpm) 3.502 Total distance (vards) 248



LYNN ALTADONNA

Handicap 18 Weight 82 kg. Height 57 Occupation Retired engineer IRRENT DRIVER: Rall flinht Medium draw Ball speed (mph) 124 Launch angle (deg.) 14.3



JIM ESTHER

Total distance (yards) 196

Handicap 22 Age 63 Weight 84 kg. Heiaht 5'11' Occupation Physician CURRENT DRIVER:

Rall flight I nw fade Ball speed (mph) 124 Launch angle (deg.) 9.5 Spin rate (rpm) 3.353 Total distance (yards) 208



JOHN MOORE

Handicap 1 Weight 107 kg Heiaht 6' Occupation Planner Oil & gas. RRENT DRIVER: Ball flight High dr



CLYDE BURDICK

Spin rate (rpm) 2 22F

Handicap 13 Weight 113 kg Occupation Retired data analyst CURRENT DRIVER: **Ball flight** Medium straight Ball speed (mph) 137



TOM JENNINGS

Handicap 14 Weight 95 kg Height 5'11 Occupation CEO, chamber of commerce RRENT DRIVER:

Ball speed (mph) 128 Launch angle (deg.) 8.1 Spin rate (rpm) 2.356 Total distance (yards) 217



KEVIN KEHOE

Spin rate (rpm) 2.63

Total distance (yards) 213

Handicap 18 Weight 77 kg Height 5'8' Occupation Painter CURRENT DRIVER: Ball flight Medium fade Ball speed (mph) 127 Launch angle (deg.) 7.9

Spin rate (rpm) 3 154

Total distance (yards) 183



PETER KRAUS

Handicap 24 Weight 84 kg Height 6'1 Occupation Attorney RRENT DRIVER: Ball flight Medium draw Ball speed (mph) 136 Launch angle (deg.) 12.6 Snin rate (rnm) 4 15



Total distance (yards) 22

GOLF.com/adams

WE TESTED: 9.5°, 10.5°, 12° with Aldila SlimTech 55 graphite shaft

PROS

\\DISTANCE: The Blue is among the longest-carrying on solid hits, with a good deal of roll, to boot; ideal launch and spin numbers for a handful of testers; even on heel and toe contact, ample distance sets you up

nicely for the next shot.

\\ACCURACY/FORGIVENESS: The Blue hits the fairway time after time; misses typically fly

on an acceptable trajectory and without much sidespin.

\\FEEL: Stable throughout the swing with little to no twisting; loud pinging sound dominates impact; light weight makes it easy to swing.

\\PLAYABILITY: Testers experience a medium-high, repeatable draw despite the fact that you can't adjust the loft here.

\\LOOK: Even purists approve of the sleek, metallic blue crown; a contrasting red alignment mark and white lines on the face make setup simple and precise: the signature speed slot on the sole gives testers confidence that it will deliver hot results.

CONS

For some testers, the lighterweight club makes it difficult to achieve consistent swings;

BRIDGESTONE

GOLF.com/bridgestone

WE TESTED: 9.5°, 10.5°, 12° with Aldila NV 65 graphite shaft



The flexible crown near the face bends back from the target to boost launch and spring.

\\ DISTANCE: This one's a monster-contact all across the face carries far and offers great rollout; one of the longest drivers in the Max Game Improvement category beats what most testers have in their bags.

\\ACCURACY/FORGIVENESS:

The JGR is easy to hit consistently from the very first swing; shots take off straight with little sidespin; top-notch correction—even the worst misses try to curve back to the centre.





WE TESTED: 9.5°, 10.5°, 11.5° with Matrix White Tie 55X4 graphite shaft

PROS

\\ DISTANCE: Its highlaunch, high-spin profile gives our slower swingers a solid boost in carry distance over the bunts they're accustomed to.

\\ ACCURACY/ FORGIVENESS: The club's best attribute—consistently churns out high, straight drives with little sidespin; an absolute slice killer—have

no fear of losing shots to the right with this one.

\\FEEL: Clubhead is heavy enough to know where it is throughout the swing and stable enough to hold firm through impact; the Max delivers an explosive sensation on shots across the face.

\\PLAYABILITY: Repeatable, with a higher flight than

many others tested; not adjustable—what you see is what you get.

\\LOOK: The prominent Cobra logo on the crown and white lines on the face aid alignment; chronic slicers will find solace in the offset head.

CONS

Some testers want greater feedback on misses; like



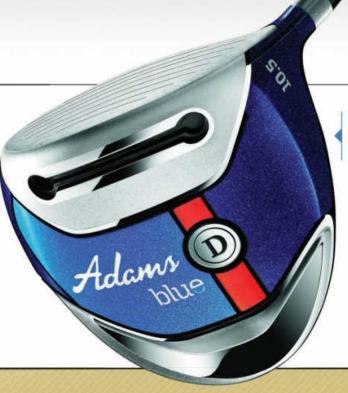
72

—Jim Esther, Handicap 22, Age 63

OURTESY ADAMS; BOTTOM: BRIAN HENN; HEAD SHOTS: AARON WENDL

impact feels a little hollow; not adjustable if the launch and spin numbers aren't perfect off the rack, there's not much you can do.

\\BOTTOM LINE: A carryover model from 2015, the Adams Blue is an attractive-looking option for higher-handicappers who prefer a lighter feel and a strong draw bias.



The sole slot contributes to additional flex—and ball speed—low on the face.



\\FEEL: The clubhead remains stable through the hitting zone; impact is exciting—the ball jumps off the face, even on minor mis-hits.

\\PLAYABILITY: The JGR consistently delivers a penetrating, medium-high ball flight that cuts through the wind; testers can't adjust loft with this one, but flipping the two weights on the sole can fine-tune shot shape.

\\LOOK: A traditional shape that sits squarely and comfortably; neon yellow graphics on the crown and white scoring lines on the clubface make it easy to set up correctly.

CON<u>S</u>

Testers prefer a less brashlooking colour scheme, and many of them would change the neon yellow grip before putting it into play; the especially deep face inspires confidence, but it takes some time to determine the correct tee height.

\\BOTTOM LINE: The Bridgestone JGR is the best model in its class—this star earned top ratings in each performance category. Any higher-handicapper looking to improve his tee game should give it a test-drive.

LAUNCH LOW MID HIGH SPIN LOW MID HIGH SPIN LOW MID HIGH The bonded head has two movable weights (6 and 12 grams) to change directional bias and CG location. It delivers max forgiveness for average Joes seeking a traditional-looking head.

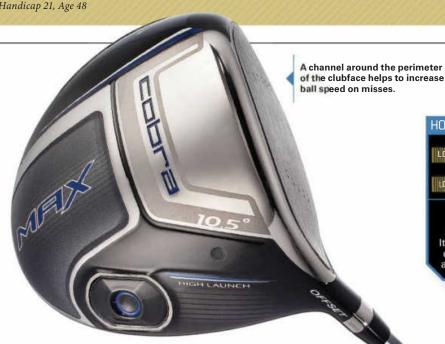


"I'D BUY IT. IN FACT, ANY SHORTER HITTER WOULD LOVE THIS DRIVER."

—David Sullivan, Handicap 21, Age 48

the majority of drivers in this category, there's no adjustability so one size fits all; offset head can be off-putting.

\\BOTTOM LINE: One of the better models. It's ideal for slow-swinging high-handicappers who need additional lift to maximise carry, as well as help eliminating card-killing banana balls.



HOT STIX TAKE

LAUNCH
LOW MID HIGH

SPIN
LOW MID HIGH

This lightweight stick
has more offset than
other draw-bias clubs.
It's the ultimate anti-slice
driver—super-forgiving
and easy to launch high.





WE TESTED: 10.5° (adjust 8.5° to 12.5°) with Mitsubishi Tensei CK Blue 50 graphite shaft

PROS

\\DISTANCE: One of the longest drivers tested this year-well-struck shots can travel as far as any model, with impressive carry and roll; balls seem to find a higher gear while in the air, which gives guys extra confidence to carry hazards; distance on mis-hits is better than average.

\\ACCURACY/FORGIVENESS:

Rewards a solid hit with

arrow-straight flight; mis-hits can wiggle both ways but often not far from the target.

\\FEEL: Relatively light, but most guys can sense the clubhead; maximum control-testers can unload on shots without losing command of the driver; impact is firm and provides plenty of usable feedback.

\\PLAYABILITY: The ball

flight may be naturally lower than others in the Max Game Improvement category, but loads of adjustability allows our panellists to dial in ideal launch; one turn of the hosel can transform a fade into a draw.

\\LOOK: Players appreciate the traditional head shape; the Vapor Fly has an updated electric-blue and green colour scheme that adds flash to any bag.



WE TESTED: 10° (adjusts 9° to 11°), 12° (adjusts 11° to 13°), with Ping Alta 55 graphite shaft

> The G SF Tec provides nine yards more fade correction than the standard G.



PROS

\\ DISTANCE: The G SF Tec is a big banger for many guys, while others place it in the middle of the pack; higher spin numbers make it a good fit for moderate swing speeds; mishits are treated to distances on par with well-struck shots.

\\ACCURACY/FORGIVENESS:

This one's a real fairway finder; the draw bias alleviates misses to the right—would-be slices gently fade onto the short grass, or at least nearby.

\\FEEL: Lighter, well-balanced feel encourages fast, controlled





WE TESTED: 9.5° (adjusts 8.5° to 10.5°), 10.5° (adjusts 9.5° to 11.5°), 12° (adjusts 11° to 13°) with Miyazaki Jinsoku graphite shaft

PROS

\\ DISTANCE: With a lower launch and less spin than many competitors, the Z 355 requires faster swings, and possibly more loft, to get shots to carry—but they hit the ground with serious legs; highly rated for getting the most distance out of misses.

\\ACCURACY/FORGIVENESS:

Shots find the fairway more often than not, but this driver falls short of the directional forgiveness found in some other models.

\\FEEL: A heavier-feeling clubhead than most in this category, which helps testers with tempo; rewards good swings with a strong, firm sensation at impact; twisting on mis-hits lets panellists know exactly what they did wrong.

\\PLAYABILITY: The adjustable hosel gives guys the freedom to program their favourite

shot shape; the lower than average ball flight is great in breezy conditions.

\\LOOK: Testers appreciate the classic pear shape and nononsense black finish; the deep clubface inspires confidence, while the white scoring lines help with alignment.

CONS

Low launch can hurt carry distance, even after lofting Not quite as forgiving as some others; the eye-catching colors, including the neon green swoosh on the crown, can be distracting.

\\BOTTOM LINE: Vast adjustability options make it a long, reliable performer for a range of players. Some guys see the Vapor Fly as a tweener between a Game Improvement and a Max model.



The sole's reinforced rear combines with a flexible channel near the face to boost ball speeds.



swings; clubhead is extremely stable, even on the worst misses; impact is loud and explosive; most agree that the sound and feel are as good or better than previous Ping G series drivers.

\\ PLAYABILITY: Consistently high, controlled draws are the order of the day; the hosel can be adjusted to find each tester's desired trajectory and shot shape.

\\LOOK: The number of turbulators on the crown has multiplied, giving it a high-tech appearance; matte black finish is attractive and won't bounce light back at you on sunny days.

CONS

All those turbulators can be distracting to look at; the large head appears too oversize for many panellists, although a few put faith in its size.

\\BOTTOM LINE: The G SF Tec is one of the top models tested in the Max Game Improvement class. Our testers adore the feel of the club, plus it has the right amount of draw bias to straighten out drives for higher-handicappers. Increased launch and spin rates make it a very good fit for smooth swingers looking to max-out distance.

HOT STIX TAKE

	LAUNCH	
LOW	MID	HIGH
***************************************	SPIN	,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,
LOW	MID	HIGH
Designed for guys		
	fight fade	
	s. Added w	

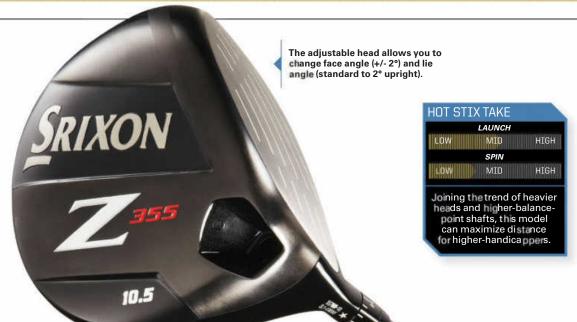
Designed for guys who fight fades or slices. Added weight positioned in back near the heel promotes maximum forgiveness with draw bias.



"A GREAT CLUB FOR PLAYERS WHO STRUGGLE TO CONSISTENTLY HIT FAIRWAYS." —Peter Kraus, Handicap 24, Age 50

up; not as forgiving as some others in the category; testers would prefer an alignment aid of some kind on the crown to make it easier to set up.

\\BOTTOM LINE: Best for faster swingers or highball hitters seeking a more penetrating flight. The Z 355 hugs the line between a Max Game Improvement and Game Improvement driver. **G**





TAYLORMADE M1 FAMILY



taylormadegolf.com.au

TaylorMade Golf have developed a multi-material combination of titanium and a seven-layer carbon composite crown to unlock their longest driver and most fittable product line in company history, M1™. In M1, engineers have created a line of drivers, fairways and Rescue® clubs designed to provide golfers with more ball speed, forgiveness and distance in TaylorMade's first-ever "unmetalwood" family.

Every golfer's swing is unique, and as the industry leader in product innovation, TaylorMade answered the challenge in delivering more performance to players of all skill levels with the introduction of M1 and its multi-material construction (driver and fairway); delivering more speed, high launch, low spin, and increased ball speed protection.

M1 provides golfers with the option to shift it back to increase MOI without compromising ideal launch conditions, which results in high launch, low spin, more ball speed more often.



TAYLORMADE M2 FAMILY



taylormadegolf.com.au

Following the remarkable success of M1 TaylorMade Golf unveiled M2 drivers, fairways and Rescue clubs to complete the M family. In M2, engineers have delivered two highly sought-after performance benefits: distance and forgiveness. This ultimately gives many golfers what they want: distance and forgiveness, without compromise. The result is a family of clubs that deliver hot trajectories with massive sweet spots and maximum forgiveness.

The M2 irons are a pure-distance, game-improvement iron. The club head is bigger, the offset is higher, the sole and top line thicker. Engineers made design decisions with distance in mind. They brought in the fluted hosel to add weight to drive the centre of gravity low and back. The end result was a launch angle high through the bag. However, the higher launch is also combined with a softer landing to get the ball to stop more quickly.

GOLF // TECH TALK

YCURTECH QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Lower your scores and have more fun with the latest and greatest state-of-the-art gear

BY MICHAEL CHWASKY

YOUR TECH QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Apps. Aides. Analyzers. Golf has always brimmed with gadgets, but in 2016, there's more stuff than ever, much of it highly sophisticated. Wading through so many options can be overwhelming, so allow us to answer seven of the most common techbased questions that flood GOLF's in-box. When it comes to innovative, game-changing products, the future is now.



Is there a way to measure my fitness data during a round while also tracking my stats?

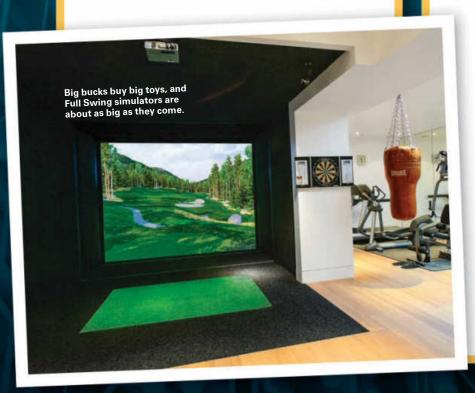
Golfers are more interested in fitness than ever, and the new Ping app for the Apple Watch is a great way to keep track of your heart rate, step count, and calorie burn while on the course. The Golf Workout, available as an in-app purchase, tracks your fitness levels and keeps you aware of your overall activity. The app itself offers other useful tools—including a Swing Practice mode that times your backswing and downswing in order to help your tempo and tracks shots and stats, too. The app also works with the iPhone and the Apple Watch to improve your putting by analysing your stroke and measuring your tempo. And if your putter is a poor fit for your stroke, the app will help you select a better option while providing feedback on the consistency of your motion.

pina.com

I've got money to spend, and I want a golf simulator that lets me play famous courses while measuring my shot data. What's the best option?

If you ask the likes of Jordan Spieth, Tiger Woods and Hunter Mahan, the answer is Full Swing golf simulators (\$25,000-\$70,000). Spieth, in fact, prepped for the Old Course on one, and he finished just a shot out of the playoff on his way to earning Player of the Year honours. Full Swing simulators use infrared and high-speed cameras to accurately measure clubhead movement, swing speed, shot trajectory, spin rates and launch angles. The software is equally impressive. It features more than 90 championship courses around the world, realtime daylight and weather and course conditions, a customisable practice facility, and 36 types of playing formats, including stroke play, matchplay and closest to the pin. You can evengo online and take on other players just about anywhere in the world. (Give our best to Jordan.)

fullswinggolf.com





Can I track my playing performance without having to write everything down? And can I share highlights with friends?

Yes and yes. And the sooner you get yourself a shot-tracking system, the more fun you'll have. A great pick is the newly updated Game Golf Live (\$299). It functions as a GPS system (with more than 40,000 courses mapped so far), tracks the distance of every shot and provides a trove of other useful data, including realtime on-course stats, course management information and Strokes Gained analysis. Game Golf Live also lets you share your biggest hits—or biggest mis-hits—with your teacher or pals, if they use Bluetooth technology and a mobile device. Also, you can compare your performance with players in your handicap range. Just attach the Game Golf tags to the butts of your clubs, use the app to link your mobile device with the Game Golf hardware, and you're on your way.

gamegolf.com

Sunglasses make it hard to read putts. Any options that protect my eyes while letting me see the subtle contours of the green?

It's no surprise that sports eyewear stalwart Oakley has tackled this problem. Prizm lenses are designed to enhance contrast on all areas of the course, on and off the greens. They make it easier to judge wedge distances, see the grain and slope, and read greens better than you would with the naked eye. Prizm technology (which controls light transmission to finely tune colours for maximum contrast) was developed to help the eye discern the colour green from others in the spectrum while also providing maximum protection from the sun's damaging rays. If you're struggling to find golf-specific sunglasses that both shield your eyes and improve your vision, the Prizm is worth a serious look.





Watch your back, Butch. The Virtual Coach could make swing gurus a thing of the past.

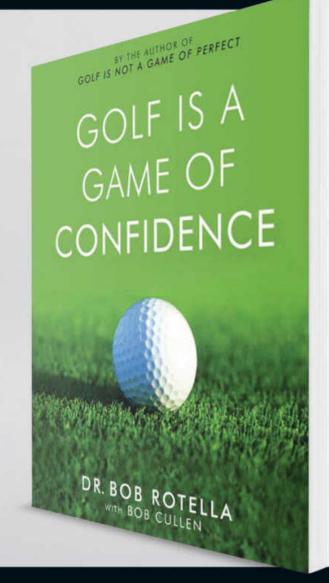
How do I get sound swing instruction and save some strokes without going to a pro?

Well, you read *GOLF*, so that's a great start. But tech-savvy types who are looking to solve the swing all by themselves should try the new Virtual Coach app from Swingbyte. Available in the iPhone app store, the Virtual Coach works in tandem with the Swingbyte digital swing analyser to identify your most critical swing faults. The app takes the data transmitted from the sensor to your iPhone and in seconds provides video drills and lessons that address your flaws. And since the app can tackle more than 100 common faults, just about any card-killing ailment—slice or hook, popup or grounder—may soon be a thing of the past.

swingbyte.com

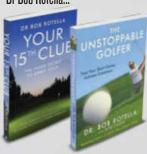
"It takes hundreds of good golf shots to gain confidence, but only one bad one to lose it."

- Jack Nicklaus



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scoreband.net

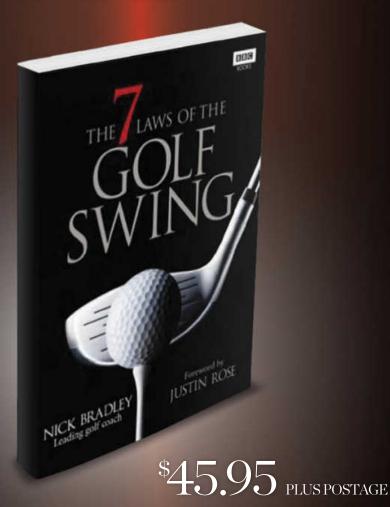
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fujikuragolf.com

IT WOULD BEASIN NOTTO READ IT



A range of practical exercises also helps to accelerate the learning process and develop a greater awareness of the feelings and sensations associated with a correct golf swing motion. With an all-new foreword by Justin Rose for this edition, The Seven Laws of the Golf Swing is an essential golf guide, from one of the sport's most sought-after coaches.

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Anyone turning 50 is playing on life's back nine. But in the world of professional golf this milestone represents a chance to re-focus with anticipation on what lies ahead. In the first of his regular *Inside the Ropes* columns, **Greg Dowling** explains why he's about to join them.

By Greg Dowling
Photography by GETTY IMAGES

any golfers with the necessary fitness and motivation are heading back out on tour to chase the sun, the dollars and the mateship on offer around Australia and New Zealand.

PGA Legends tournaments are staged regularly all over the country and range from 18-hole pro-ams to state opens and even a couple of national titles. And they are growing in number and popularity for good reason.

Everyone gets on (pros, amateurs and sponsor guests) and that tends to be the lure for businesses to stump up enough prize money to attract progolfers to travel far and wide while marketing their products or services among target audiences.

So the 19th hole is a wonderful place for club members to connect really well with a golf pro that has 'normal' distance off the tee, offers

free tips and is actually looking for a bit of fun and social interaction.

This leads to plenty of goodnatured ribbing during the speeches, some old-fashioned horseplay and a genuine sense of wanting to be part of it.

But what's also really important is striving for excellence in the heat of battle out on the course.

I planned to rejoin the tour after a bit of a break when it reached Tura Beach on the south coast of NSW for a 36-hole pro-am sponsored by Bega Cheese.

The field for the event was expected to be quite strong, just as it should be in any arena where a title and \$50,000 prize money are on the line.

Some of the marquee players who tee it up in selected tournaments include major champions Wayne Grady and Ian Baker-Finch, the evergreen Peter Senior, Rodger Davis, Mike Harwood, Peter 'Chook

INSIDE THE ROPES





Fowler, Peter O'Malley, Terry Price, Wayne Riley and the list goes on. Three-time Australian Masters champion Craig Parry has also now 'qualified' to join the tour after turning 50 on 12 January.

Tura Beach Country Club is about five kilometres north of Merimbula and was opened in 1984 after fivetime British Open champion Peter Thomson and then business partner Mike Wolveridge were commissioned to put their stamp on a hilly site that would have presented some challenges during construction. But the end product offers plenty in the way of variety with strategy dictated by water hazards, strategically located bunkering and greens that have their share of break and can get quite fast.

So we journeymen cover plenty of ground, meet lots of interesting people and play a number of very different courses

Following the Tura Beach event, the PGA Legends Tour headed to Victoria for about eight events before travelling across the border into South Australia and then on to Queensland for winter. So we journeymen cover plenty of ground, meet lots of interesting people and play a number of very different courses, sometimes for the first time and usually without having time for a practice round.

In the old days (before the turn of the century) that meant playing blind, but now with the Internet as a research tool and GPS devices to provide accurate yardages (distances), the task is a fair bit easier.

And that is just as it should be for this eclectic group of 'grey nomads' with plenty of fire still in their somewhat ample bellies.

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::DAVID FEHERTY::

After 19 years with CBS, David Feherty has a new home at NBC, where he'll join Johnny, Rog and the gang. With the Peacock Network covering this year's British Open, Olympics and the Ryder Cup, golf's funniest man is ready for his close-up.

Interview by Connell Barrett
Photography by MATTHEW SALACUSE





::DAVID FEHERTY::

es, David Feherty is 'on' even when he's off the air. As he strolls into a bright Manhattan loft space for GOLF's photo shoot and interview, he politely declines a handshake. His right mitt is swollen. "Sorry, just had surgery," he says. Diagnosis? "Excessive masturbatory syndrome." Actually, it's arthritis made worse by some ugly spills he took off his bicycle. "I'm 57, but I feel 75 the way I've treated myself. If I'd have

known I'd live this long, I'd have looked after myself." Feherty's longevity is NBC's gain. After 19 years, he left CBS last September, and the Peacock Network signed him faster than you can say "Irish wit." He has plenty to look forward to in 2016 beyond sparring with Johnny Miller: NBC will air the British Open, Olympics and Ryder Cup. "I'm nervous and excited, like I'm starting over," Feherty says. "I just hope McCord can carry on. He'll probably have a breakdown without me."

You make your NBC debut at the Waste Management in Phoenix. Does this feel like a fresh start?

It's a new chapter, for sure. And all those years at CBS, and all the people I got to work with—it was amazing. Ironically, Phoenix is a tournament I've covered for 19 years. It's exciting, but I am nervous. It's a different challenge, a different style. And I won't only be on the course. I'll spend time in the tower at 18

Is that where the nerves come from—the spotlight of being in the booth with Johnny?

Maybe a little. It's a different perspective, a different cast. Really, I'm just glad NBC wanted me and that I'll get to keep doing this. I'm an outside pet. If you don't let me out every couple of hours, somebody's gonna get crapped on. Part of the apprehension is that I don't really know what to expect.

At CBS, Gary McCord was the Hardy to your Laurel. Who'll be your comedic foil at NBC?

Well, there's [Roger] Maltbie and [Peter] Jacobsen and Johnny—who I didn't know until I interviewed him recently on my Golf Channel show. He was so genuine and heartfelt. For a long time, I used to think Johnny might have a little meanness, but that interview changed my opinion. He's just honest, without much of a filter. We've got a lot in common in that sense.

How was the chemistry when you interviewed him?

I liked him immediately. He was very candid and emotional. There were things we touched on—how important being a good father is to him—that clearly he was tender about. He really opened up and showed a side you don't see or hear when he's in the booth.

As a fellow broadcaster, what do you most admire about him?

He's immensely knowledgeable, and he played the game at the very highest level. That's the biggest difference between us. Johnny knows what it's like to win. I'm an expert in what it's like to lose.

So Johnny knows what the top players are going through in the big moments. What perspective do you offer?

I can also sense what they're feeling, but when I was in a position to win, I never wanted the responsibility that went with winning. I never had the ability to overcome that. Johnny knows how it feels to win at the highest level, so I think I have more in common with the average golfer. Johnny was anything but average.

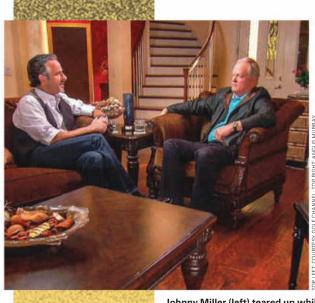
In your years at CBS, what moment stands out—a call you made, a tournament you covered—as your finest?

Just having 19 years at the Masters is pretty special. When you think of the people that have covered it-Henry Longhurst, Tom Weiskopf, Pat Summerall, Ken Venturi—just having my voice on that telecast is really something. And to be there throughout the Tiger Woods era was just incredible. My first Masters was in 1997, and a 21-year-old wins it. My last Masters, another 21-year-old [Jordan Spieth] wins it. Two pretty good bookends there. And let me say that I will miss everybody at CBS enormously. Not just the names everyone knows—Nantz, Faldo, Kostis—but the entire crew. They were all so good to me. I still have a lot of letters to write.

You've witnessed many jaw-dropping Tiger moments. What's No. 1?

When Tiger first came out and started pulling off these unbelievable shots, people didn't believe what I'd say on the air. They'd say, "That shot wasn't as hard as you made it out to be." But the shots were that difficult. As for his best of all time, I go to the chip-in on 16 at Augusta [in 2005]. Tiger doesn't think it's his greatest shot, but given the moment, and the extraordinary nature of the shot, it was pretty special.

When you follow Tiger's group, how much do you two interact?





Johnny Miller (left) teared up while talking with Feherty on Golf Channel. Feherty and Gary McCord (right) were a dynamic comedy duo on CBS for nearly 20 years.

"I USED TO THINK
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IN COMMON."

Often. One of the first times I covered him, he called me out. It was at Cog Hill, and on the ninth hole, he'd hit it underneath a tree, off the right fairway. Now, I'm new to broadcasting, so I go have a look at the line, and I come back and say, "He's got to chip it out sideways." Fluff [Mike Cowan] was on his bag, and he pulls out a long-iron. I think, What's he doing with that? Is Tiger's back itchy? Then I see he's aiming directly at me. Now, I'd been a pro for 20-plus years, so I thought I knew where I could safely stand. Nope. Tiger unleashes a vicious swing and violent follow-through. The ball shoots over my head and goes 240 yards, cuts about 50 yards, bounces twice and onto the green. McCord says, "It must have been a better line than you thought." I said, "No. It wasn't."

And did Tiger then say something to you?

He did. I went back for another look at this line because I'm pissed. This kid just made me look like an idiot on TV. I'd played with the best. I knew what Greg Norman or Seve Ballesteros or any other human would do from that position. They'd chip out sideways. I hear "Oy!" Tiger flashes that beautiful smile and says, "You called that one, didn't you?" I'm thinking, You little.... I say, "I don't know what you are, but there weren't two of you on Noah's Ark." Those were the first words we ever exchanged.

A lot of people are writing Tiger's golf obituary. He entered 2016 ranked 413th in the world. If he gets healthy this year, do you think he can win again?

Absolutely. The only mistake I've ever made about Tiger is underestimating him. He's too proud and too good. If he's in better shape, I think he can win again. I'm a believer.

What's behind his poor play in recent years?

I think he has more anxiety about winning than he used to. In his prime, he only paid attention to what he was doing—the physical act of hitting the shot—and no attention whatsoever to the result. He's lost a bit of focus on the





::DAVID FEHERTY::

process. When Michael Jordan went up for that fadeaway, he wasn't worried about making or missing. He was in the here and now. That's what being in the zone is all about: occupying yourself with the physical act and blocking out the result. Tiger still has that ability, but for the last two or three years he's been too invested in the result rather than in owning the action.

You've said there are sides to Tiger that most people don't ever see. Like what?

For one thing, he shows up at my foundation's events for wounded military. He comes on his own, no cameras, has lunch with the boys. If a kid's got one arm, Tiger will hit

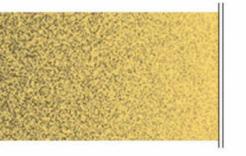
but it's been a very difficult part of his life. But there's a difference between scratching your ass and tearing yourself a new one. When he hit that period with all the women, other a--holes like John Edwards and Eliot Spitzer were also running around, but the Tiger coverage was relentless. You'd have thought he was a mass murderer. He got so much limelight that he was scorched by it. But I know he would be the first to say, "A lot of this is my fault."

How does Tiger's sense of humour come out when he's with you?

I remember one time he says, "Hey, Feherty," pulling the bill of his cap down so the cameras can't read his lips. "What do you call a black guy flying an airplane?" I say I don't know. He says, "A pilot, you f---ing racist." [Laughs] He loves to needle, to give people a hard time. But there's an intellectual exchange there as well. He wants you to give it back to him. Nicklaus is similar that way. He can't stand people who are too impressed with him. There's no intellectual challenge in that. You want someone who respects you but who doesn't want to climb up your ass and tell you how wonderful you are.

Looking at NBC's golf schedule, which event are you most excited about?

We've got the best stroke-play tournament in the world, the Open Championship, and the best matchplay tournament, the Ryder Cup. And



"THE ONLY MISTAKE I'VE EVER MADE ABOUT TIGER WOODS IS UNDERESTIMATING HIM. HE'S TOO PROUD AND TOO GOOD. IF HE'S HEALTHY, HE CAN WIN AGAIN. I'M A BELIEVER."

balls with one arm. Or no legs, he'll hit it off his knees. And he's so darn funny, but we beat that out of him by following him from the minute he arrives [at a Tour event]. As badly as he's played lately, there's still a camera on him when he walks in the door, or when he walks to the courtesy car, or takes off his shoes. If Phil or Furyk or Els shoot 75, there's no need to interview them. With Tiger, after every single round he plays in public, there's a forest of microphones—and a bunch of pricks holding them. That's why he doesn't offer much up in interviews. He's numb to it all. He's developed a heat shield.

Come on, isn't that the deal you make when you're an elite athlete? It's easy to blame the media for Tiger being a bit closed off.

I don't blame the media completely. I never thought I would feel bad for the guy who's made a zillion bucks,



Feherty on the media: "With every round Tiger plays, there's a forest of microphones and a bunch of pricks holding them." Present company excluded, of course.

we've got the Olympics. I'm not sure what to expect in Rio, but to have that gold medal on the line, the excitement is going to build.

At CBS, how much did you censor yourself when doing the Masters? Would you worry about saying the wrong thing?

I always did the Masters differently. It's a major, so it commands more respect. But it might have been the easiest tournament to do because it requires so little commentary. People are so familiar with the course that I just added punctuation. The pictures tell the story. That's one reason I'm really looking forward to the Open Championship. There's a tremendous opportunity for silence, something missing in so many sports. A favourite Open memory is of Henry Longhurst in 1970. Doug Sanders is standing over that three-and-a-half-footer. With the deafening silence of Henry

not speaking, you knew something god-awful would happen. When Sanders missed, Henry said, "What a pity." That was it. Genius.

Do you have any TV aspirations beyond golf? Will we see you on The Voice in a big red swivel chair? [Laughs] There are possibilities, but the first thing I want to be is informative, and then entertaining, about golf. That's what I do. That's job one. Anything beyond that would be gravy.

Let's talk about the 2015 Player of the Year. Where does Spieth's season rank? Right near the top. Beyond winning two majors and the FedEx Cup, look at the nature of the competition he faced, the deep fields. There are Web.com Tour players who could go out and win a Tour event. But I think the chances of one player rising above the rest is slight, as special as Jordan is. Look at how many first-time winners we're having. The standard of golf today is just staggering.

You saw Spieth go wire-to-wire at Augusta last year. What stood out to you?

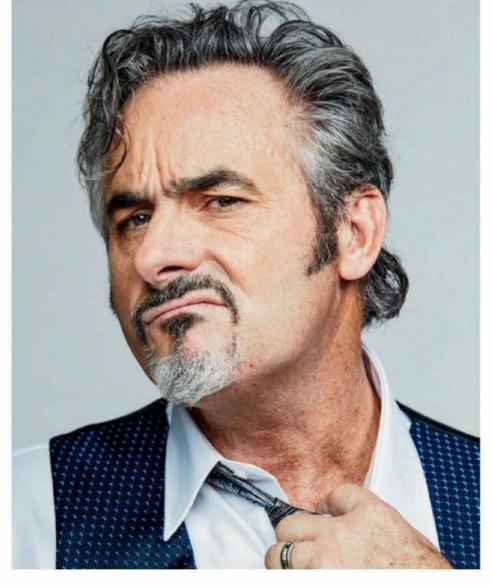
He has wisdom well beyond his years—and a little evil in him, too. He gets pissed off at himself but can channel it back into the next shot. And to have that kind of lead [four strokes entering Sunday] and to close it out—that's the hardest lead in golf to defend. The green jacket feels like a suit of armour on Sunday afternoon. He's very special. He has balls the size of wheelbarrows.

Of all the golf greats you've known, who taught you the most about the game?

Bob Torrance, my longtime coach in Europe. A remarkable man, a rogue, a savant. He was extraordinarily funny, and his son, Sam, is my greatest friend, outside of my wife.

Bob Torrance died in 2014. When you think of him, what memory comes to mind?

I recall walking along the range at the Open Championship at Birkdale in '91. A certain player—a former World



No. 1 who shall remain nameless—waves Bob over. He says, "Bob, do me a favour. I'm struggling. Give me a tip." Bob watches him hit a couple of shots, then whispers something in his ear. The guy reacts with this confused look, and Bob walks away. I asked Bob what tip he gave. "I told him to never tie his shoes in a revolving door." Ah, great moments in sport.

You've had some not-so-great moments while bicycling, getting banged up a few times. Have you given it up for good?

Yes, I lost my nerve when I got hit for the third time. The first time I got run over nearly killed me. The second time, I got hit from behind in New York City. A lady ran a red light—I went through her windshield and almost came out the back windshield. I can take a hint.

Maybe you should try a stationary bike.

I'd probably get hit by a stationary car. Or a chandelier would fall on me.

So your body is still hurting, but at least you seem to be on the mend.

How's your head? You've battled depression and alcoholism for many years.

I'm bipolar. Most days, I get out of bed and I'm overwhelmed by sadness—and that's before I see myself naked. With my condition, I don't really have tremendous highs or enormous lows. What helps is I'm on a cocktail [of medication]. I don't like taking it, because you just feel hollow, but it's necessary, and it sure beats the alternative.

How's sobriety treating you?

I've been sober for 10 years. It's not always easy. When I'm in a hotel, those mini-bars with the windows are the worst. I can see the Jack Daniel's bottle waving at me.

Let's fast-forward one year. As you imagine looking back at 2016—NBC, the Olympics, the Ryder Cup—what are you most proud of?
Not getting fired.

That's a pretty low bar.

Exactly. I always want the bar to be just high enough so I can crawl underneath it. •

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GOLF 19#3









COURSE

Bandon Dunes Golf As It Was Meant To Be

Paul Prendergast discovers a golf heaven perched on the clifftops of the spectacular Oregon coastline

Story and Photos: Paul Prendergast

After spending three and a half days squeezing in 108 holes of breathtaking golf, it was clear that it didn't take a marketing guru an age at great expense to create a strapline that best embodies golf at Bandon Dunes, perched on the clifftops of the spectacular Oregon coastline.

Like the pure links golfing land that greets you at the five courses (including a magical par-3 layout) that have sprung up over little more than a decade, the line was most likely sitting there all along in the subconscious, waiting to be brought to light.

'Golf as it was meant to be.' the message greeting you at the entrance to the pro shop at the main lodge, says it all

After all we had heard and were about to experience firsthand, this simple, understated sentiment was the perfect introduction to a



golf destination that is far from understated.

Bandon is quite simply golf as it was meant to be, and golf that you need to go out of your way to experience at least once.

Writing for audiences on the other side of the world, I can appreciate the logistical considerations. We certainly procrastinated enough after an embryonic plan was hatched at the 2013 World Cup of Golf at Royal Melbourne, when an American friend visiting Australia for the first time helped sow the seed.

In between watching the tournament and introducing him to famed layouts such as Kingston Heath, Woodlands and St Andrews Beach, he kept up a daily 'Bandon' banter which eventually turned lethargy into strategy on our behalf. And we're forever indebted.

The man behind this glorious expression of golf is Chicago developer Mike Keiser, who was pointed in the direction of the spectacular property of dunes, gorse and majestic coastal views from 100-foot clifftops on the isolated Oregon coast when searching for the ideal land to develop his vision for golf as it was meant to be in the US.

Keiser brought in a then unknown Scot, David McLay Kidd, to design the first course, Bandon Dunes, which opened to widespread acclaim in 1999.

Tom Doak's Pacific Dunes opened two years later and over the next decade, Coore & Crenshaw's Bandon Trails (they were also responsible for the sublime par-three course, Bandon Preserve) was added, and finally, Doak and Jim Urbina completed Old MacDonald in 2010.

The response from across the United States in particular has been stunning, with many players making the annual pilgrimage to get their fix.

Two-time PGA Tour winner Kevin Streelman loves the place

Bandon is quite simply golf as it was meant to be. And golf that you need to go out of your way to experience at least once. and considers Bandon Trails to be "a masterpiece, with a perfect blend of short and long par-3's, long and driveable par-4's just perfect in my opinion. They're all amazing though."

Not for the first time, Australia's 2006 US Open champion Geoff Ogilvy prepared for the 2015 Open at Chambers Bay (he finished tied 18th) with several days at Bandon the week before, playing at least 36 holes every day.

"Being in a place like that with all your buddies, having a couple of beers and playing 36 holes a day, it just excites the senses." Ogilvy said of Bandon Dunes.

"You play 36 and you are wondering if you can fit another nine in before bed. It's not that I don't have the passion for the game, you just realise how much you like the game."

While the quality of golf is widely acknowledged in prominent world course ranking lists, Doak noted the Bandon of today has surpassed anything that Keiser had in mind when he set out to pursue his passion.

"I think Mike would be the first to tell you that the resort has exceeded his expectations, by a lot. He was hoping it would become a special place but I know his biggest vision initially was just to have two courses."





COURSE

"He's proceeded incrementally to be sure that the size of the place never overwhelms the experience of being there that everyone has loved so much from the beginning."

Each of the designers, on all but the inland Bandon Trails, have taken advantage of the stunning coastline with uninterrupted views as far as the eye can see, with a series of jawdropping holes played to and along

the cliff edge.

Keiser's final addition to the Bandon collection – Old Macdonald - pays homage to early 20th century course designer Charles Blair Macdonald and, in particular, his iconic National Golf Links of America on Long Island, NY, Keiser's favourite golf course.

The finished product is not only a seamless addition to the resort's armoury of memorable and exciting links holes but also a walking education in classic course architecture. You'll find a Road Hole at 'Old Mac', albeit a straightaway version compared to the dogleg 17th at the Old Course at St. Andrews. However its green complex, devilish pot bunker and swales make it is a close match with the original.

It was a shame that none of our foursome caught the 'Road Hole' bunker when we played, although earlier in the round, one of us was overjoyed to have speared his approach into the pot bunker fronting the Eden Hole (see St Andrews 11th) at the 2nd.

An excitable reaction such as this was not only a feature of a round at Old Mac but across all the courses at Bandon. With all due respect to tennis, I thanked my lucky stars that I



took up playing golf way back when, as we bounced around energetically like kids with new toys.

In the summer months, with firm, fast fairways and a constant ocean breeze prevailing, yardage books and distance markers were largely superfluous. Bandon's turf and tight fescue green surrounds reminded of a comment five-time British Open champion Peter Thomson made to me some years ago: "There's a special skill to hitting the ball off tight links fairways."

I don't know if Mr Thomson has had the chance to visit Bandon but I suspect he'd heartily approve of what has evolved here.

Your first challenge is perhaps this most basic of fundamentals in playing the game, clipping the ball cleanly and squarely off tight, bouncy

In the summer months, with firm, fast fairways and a constant ocean breeze prevailing, yardage books and distance markers were largely superfluous.



"There's a special skill to hitting the ball off tight, links fairways."

turf. ,Hitting to a yardage on most occasions meant very little. Judging the strength of the wind, picking a spot to land the ball, where to play for position for the best chance of getting the next shot close and then, with which club to try to execute the shot, best illustrates the 'fun' that lies in store, around every corner and on every course at Bandon.

None of the golf courses extend beyond 6900 yards (6200m) yet the wind, an occasional fog bank and the sea air ensure your shotmaking and recovery skills will be thoroughly tested. Brute strength alone will not be rewarded as much as imagination and creativity.

As the designer of Pacific Dunes and Old Macdonald, Doak clearly has a personal affinity and a strong sense of satisfaction with what has developed in a relatively short time at Bandon.

Credited with many great designs, including Cape Kidnappers in New Zealand and Barnbougle Dunes in Tasmania along with many important restorations of classic golf courses, Doak's influences have been many and varied, but 12 months living in St Andrews in his early years inspired a passion for the ideals of links golf that have been replicated at Bandon.

"Aside from the great appeal of links golf, I think one of the things that's always driven the success of Bandon is the enthusiasm of the people who work at the resort," Doak said.

"As in Scotland, most of them have gravitated to the place because they are golfers or at least appreciate golf as an outdoor experience, so everyone is excited to be there and to hear what you think of the place.

"Naturally, that goes double for me; in working there off and on over 15 years. It's kind of like going home to see the family." •



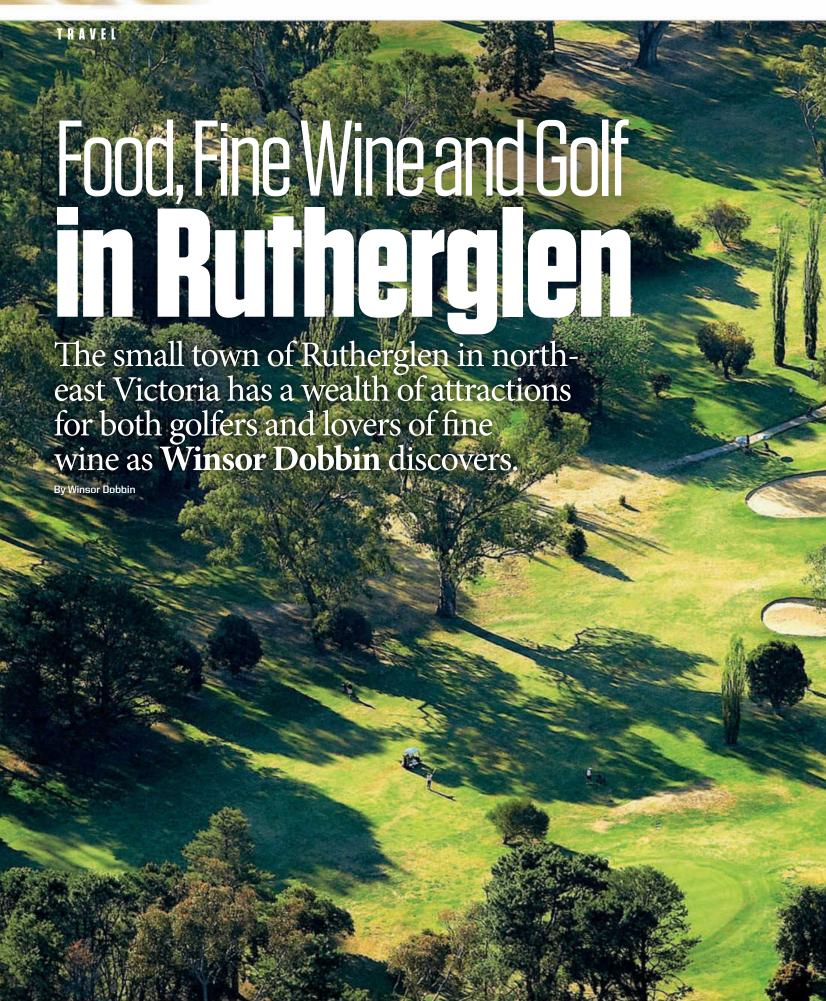


Bandon Dunes Golf Resort

57744 Round Lake Rd, Bandon, OR 97411 www.bandondunesgolf.com









isiting some of the great fortified wine producers of Rutherglen is like taking a step back in time.

Drop in to the cellars of Morris, All Saints, Buller and Campbells and you can feel and smell the history among the big old barrels storing ancient fortified wines.

But while Rutherglen's reputation was built on its famous port-style wines, muscats and tokays (now known as topaques), it is also a go-ahead wine region with several producers thinking outside the square and producing innovative new styles.

This is one of Victoria's leading wine and food destinations, boasting over 20 award-winning wineries, outstanding restaurants and cafés, and world-class local produce.

It is also home to some of the most picturesque camping, fishing, cycling, swimming and boating locations in Australia and is surrounded by topnotch resort and country golf courses, offering a range of options within a short drive.

The Rutherglen Golf Club is 5279 metres for men and 5020 metres for ladies, with a par of 69 for men and 71 for ladies, but the sandscrape putting surfaces do not appeal to all visitors.

The course was originally established over 100 years ago on what was Quarry Hill but has since been redesigned as part of the Rutherglen Park and Recreation Reserve and adjoins Lake King.

Within a few minutes' drive are excellent layouts at Corowa and Howlong with Yarrawonga, Wodonga, Wangaratta, Albury, Thurgoona, Myrtleford and Cobram Barooga all nearby.

Tocumwal and Bright, both just over a one-hour drive away, are other possible golfing destinations.

Corowa Golf Club, with its undulating fairways and greens, is among the most popular local courses; situated alongside the Murray River with 27 championship holes (including a 6504 metre, par-73 layout), pro shop, modern clubhouse and motel.

Howlong Golf Club offers a 5689 metres, par-70 course with a number of well-placed bunkers, and lushly landscaped lakes provide a water challenge on four holes.



TRAVEL



Yarrawonga Mulwala Golf Club Resort is located alongside the Murray River and is the largest public access golf resort in Australia, with 45 holes on offer: the 18-hole Murray and Lake courses and the nine-hole Executive course.

A newcomer is the nearby 18-hole Black Bull layout designed by Peter Thomson and Ross Perrett, which features several holes wrapped around Lake Mulwala.

Once you've played a round or two, Rutherglen is home to wineries ranging from 150-year-old household names to newcomers like Scion, Valhalla and Simao & Co, just starting to forge their own legends.

Most are family owned, boutique operations where you'll almost certainly find sturdy reds made from shiraz and durif alongside the fortified gems.

Experimentation is alive and well with Stanton & Killeen and Campbells trialling a range of Spanish and Portuguese grape varieties, hoping

they replicate the success enjoyed by the Rhone varietals of marsanne, roussanne and viognier, which have been championed by Rutherglen Estates, the region's largest producer.

Tempranillo, sangiovese and zinfandel add variety to the reds of the region, and some of the country's best sparkling reds are also found here.

There is also a variety of cellar door experiences and for a town with a population of just 2,500, myriad options for wining and dining.

Old favourites include The Terrace at All Saints and Tuileries Restaurant and Wine Bar, but Rutherglen also has several new hotspots ranging from the Taste @ Rutherglen restaurant and its adjacent micro brewery to the new Thousand Pound wine bar and the casual lunches at Lake Moodemere Estate just out of town.

Thousand Pound has been developed by Denis Lucey (Bottega Melbourne). the Brown family from All Saints Estate and St Leonards.

Originally only open for three nights, Thousand Pound is now open from Thursday to Sunday evenings.

Nick Brown says he crafted the extensive wine list with family and friends in mind. Wines have been sourced predominantly from family-owned wineries, and winemakers and wineries that he admires.

Housed in an original Victorian storefront in Rutherglen's historic Main Street, Thousand Pound has bar seating, and high tables in the main room, with an inviting alcove with wine barrels for intimate groups.

Chefs Simon Arkless and Cait Mitchelhill from the hatted Terrace Restaurant at All Saints Estate prepare humble, fresh, bar food, such as house-smoked salmon, and local marinated olives.

Choose from an All Saints Rosa Rosé or a Cheateau de Fesles cabernet franc from the Loire Valley and others.

For a serious dinner prepared by chef Gavin Swalwell, Taste @ Rutherglen is a lively spot serving an





TEMPRANILLO, SANGIOVESE AND ZINFANDEL ADD VARIETY TO THE REDS OF THE REGION, AND SOME OF THE COUNTRY'S BEST SPARKLING REDS ARE ALSO FOUND HERE.

al a carte selection or a degustation menu featuring dishes like housemade gnocchi with confit of duck, Wooragee mushrooms and baby spinach, or perhaps caramelised pork belly in a house-made masterstock.

Other options include the delightful Jones Winery Café and Pickled Sisters, adjacent to the Cofield cellar door at nearby Wahgunyah. This is a favourite of local winemakers, who like to share the outstanding platters of local produce. Also don't miss out on Parker Pies in the main street, something of a regional legend.

While the great fortified producers dating back to the 1800s: Chambers Rosewood, Morris, All Saints and Campbells are among the biggest drawcards, it also worthwhile seeking out smaller producers like Warrabilla, where I came across winemaker Andrew Sutherland Smith covered in soot after spending the afternoon fighting a bushfire.

Sutherland Smith has a huge following for his bold and idiosyncratic red wines.

Those with a taste for something different will enjoy Rutherglen Estates, where they can sample varieties including arneis, savagnin, viognier, fiano, tempranillo, sangiovese and zinfandel alongside the region's trademark durifs, shirazes and muscats.

Also check out Anderson Wines, where father and daughter Howard and Christobelle Anderson only release their wines when they are convinced they are at their peak, and Stanton & Killeen, which has been reinvigorated by new CEO Wendy Killeen.

At Buller Wines, now owned by local couple Gerald and Mary Judd, the facilities and wines are being returned to past glories by new GM Paul Squires and winemaker David Whyte, a dynamic duo with big plans.

Other possibilities include grandiose All Saints and historic St Leonards (both with dining options and both owned by the Brown family), and boutique operations like John Gehrig Wines, Scion and Valhalla. Pfeiffer Wines has been re-energised by the arrival of winemaker Jen Pfeiffer, daughter of family patriarch Chris.

THE RULES OF TOURING GOLF ARE ABOUT TO CHANGE FOREVER.







TRAVEL



It is de rigueur for visitors to visit the cellars at Morris or Campbells to savour the rich aromas of treacle, butterscotch and oak emanating from wines that have been maturing for decades in casks or giant oak barrels.

Other options include staying for a night or two at long-time favourite Tuileries, the cosy Rutherglen Country Cottages, or at Moodemere Lake House, the latest accommodation offering.

The broad deck and living area provide views of Lake Moodemere (think pelicans and the occasional platypus), while the bedroom faces the extensive vineyard. The setting is idyllic.

With only one house on the site, privacy is guaranteed. The double bed is extremely comfortable and there are all modern facilities - including television reception.

A complimentary bottle of Lake Moodemere wine is included (if you are lucky you might get the outstanding 2013 Shiraz Cinsault blend), along with provisions for a cooked breakfast. A late check-out is included in the very reasonable tariffs.

Golfers can also test their skill with the Great Lake Moodemere Hole in One Challenge at the estate cellar door where the green floats on a pontoon in the lake. The cellar door serves excellent light lunches and is just a short stroll from the rental accommodation.

One of the more interesting ways of exploring is the Wahgunyah to Rutherglen extension of the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail, enabling cyclists to ride the sealed path from the banks of the Murray to historic Rutherglen. The nine kilometre trail travels through the heart of the wine region.

For those who don't want to worry about driving but would like to travel in style, Alister Chisholm from Rutherglen Country Cottages has a luxury Ford stretch limo to ferry visitors from cellar door to cellar door in rock star style.

Whichever direction you choose, you'll find interesting golf courses and some terrific wines.

THE AUS

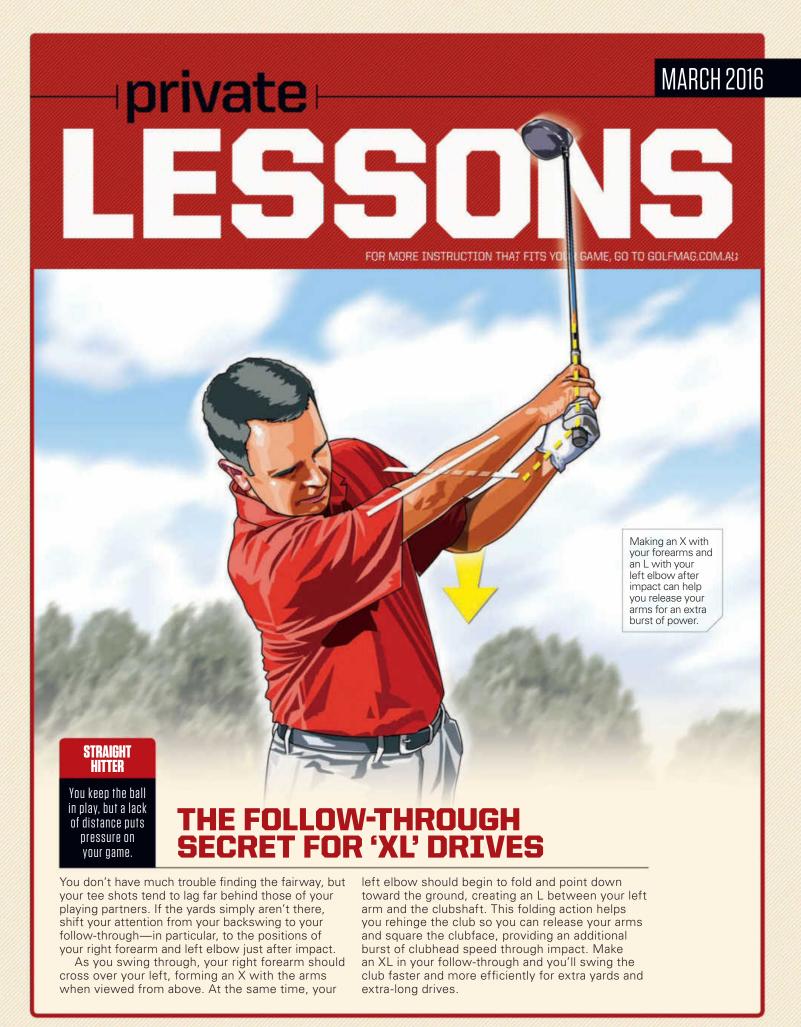
Getting there: Rutherglen is a threehour drive from Melbourne, four hours from Canberra and six hours from Sydney. The closest airport is at Albury.

Tastes of Rutherglen, the region's major food and wine festival, will be held on the weekend of March 12-13, 2016.

Wineries will be offering food, wine tastings, live entertainment and masterclasses with buses running between the different venues.

For details see www.tastesofrutherglen.com.au



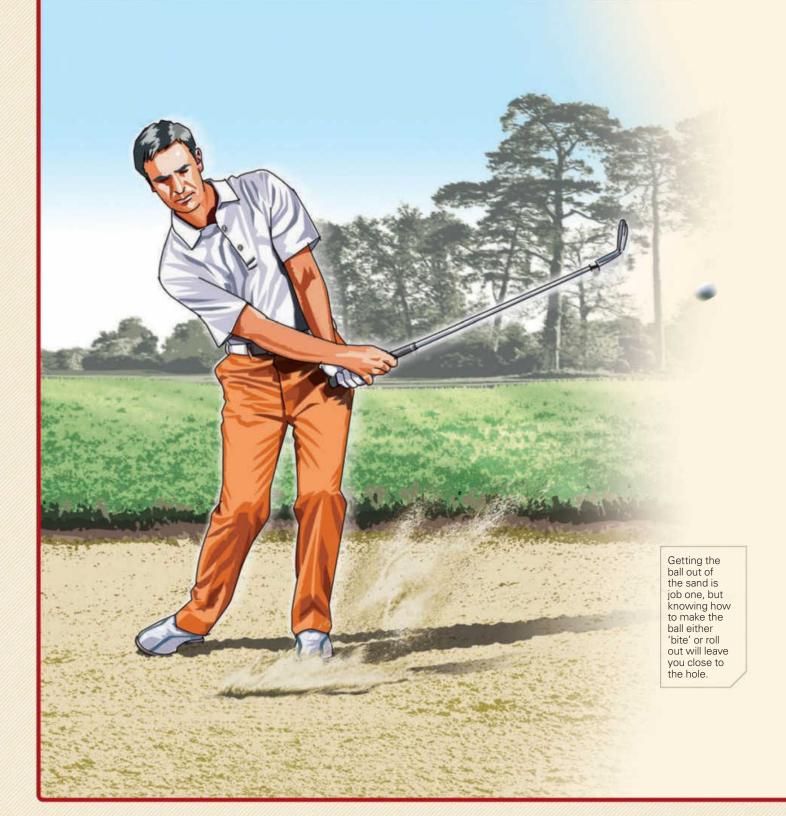


LOW Handicapper

You play well but want to shave those last few strokes off your handicap.

SPIN TO WIN! 2 WAYS TO MAKE MORE SANDIES

The best players in the world get the ball up and down from the sand about half the time. How? They're able to control the way the ball reacts once it hits the green. They can add spin when they need the ball to check up close to the hole, or take off spin when the play is to run the ball up to the flag. Here's how to hit both shots consistently to within one-putt range just by changing the way the clubhead leaves the sand.



HOW TO MAKE IT BITE For most sand shots, adding spin will help you knock it closer. To pull this

For most sand shots, adding spin will help you knock it closer. To pull this off, you want the clubhead to swing up vertically immediately after contacting the sand. As the clubhead touches down, you should feel as though it's passing your hands, with the shaft virtually straight up and down. Then, as you bend your left elbow just after impact, the clubhead should quickly move toward the sky, creating a narrow angle between your hands and your left shoulder. The more vertical you make your release, the more loft—and stopping power—you'll produce.

A narrow angle between your hands and left shoulder at the end of the swing means you've made a steep followthrough, which creates a highspinning shot that grabs the green.

HOW TO MAKE IT ROLL

When the pin is back and you've got ample green to work with, the smart play is to run the ball up to the hole, as you would with a chip shot. Spin is your enemy here. To reduce it, make your normal backswing but allow your right arm to stretch across your torso, which will push your hands away from your left arm and into a slightly higher position. You'll notice that the angle between your hands and your left shoulder is much wider than the angle formed at the end of the high-spin shot. This move ensures that the clubhead exits the sand on a shallower angle, reducing the spin and increasing the roll.



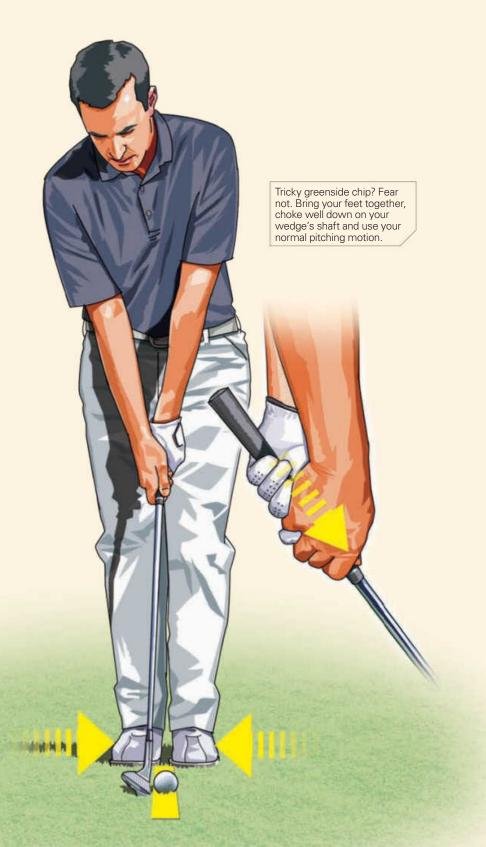
SENIOR Player

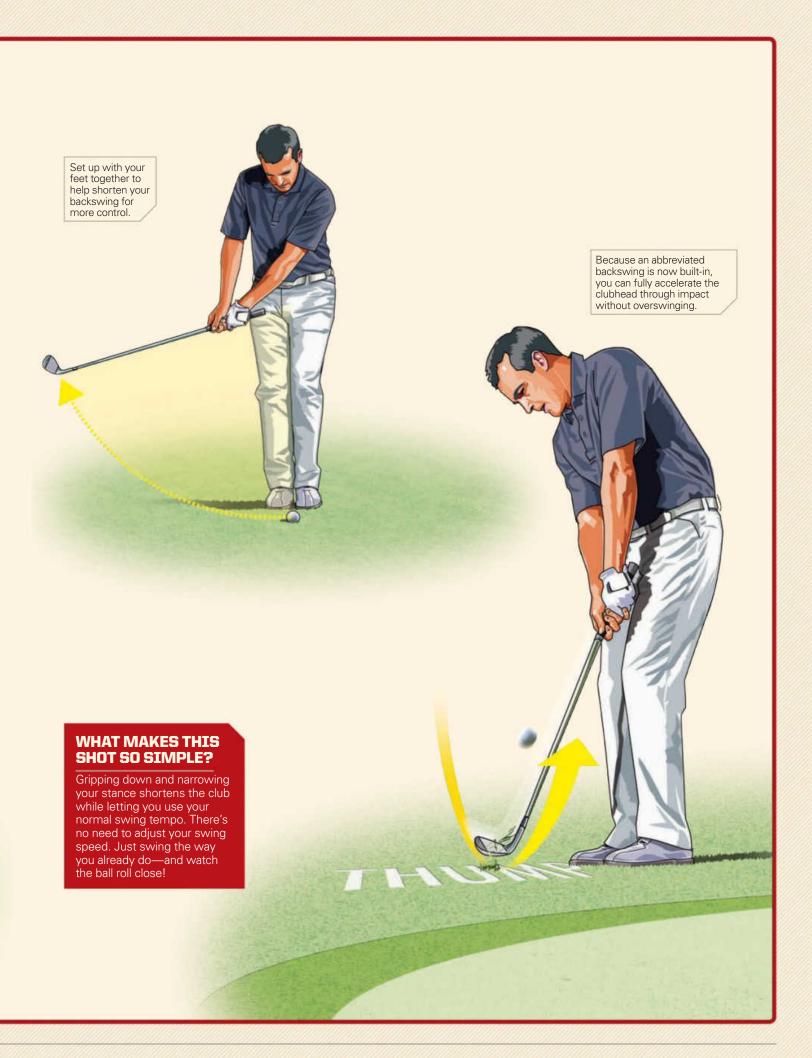
You've lost some flexibility and power, but you still know how to score.

HOW TO PITCH IT EXTRA SOFT FROM EXTRA CLOSE

When your ball is a few yards short of the green, would you rather putt, or do you prefer to chip or pitch? If you reach for your flatstick, beware: The grass may be too long to let you accurately roll the ball, or the pin may be so close to the edge that distance control is unpredictable. The solution is the extra-small, extra-soft pitch, a shot that doesn't require much of a swing but that provides enough oomph to safely loft the ball onto the green with ample distance.

To execute this shot, set up with your feet almost touching and the ball centred between your heels. This extra-narrow stance automatically restricts your hip turn and helps shorten your backswing. Grip down toward the bottom of the grip, which effectively makes your wedge shorter—like a putter—and less powerful. Swing with your normal pitching tempo and try to 'thump' the ground under the ball with the sole, or bottom, of your wedge. The ball will pop up softly and stop quickly, making it easier to attack those tight pins.





POWER HITTER

You hit the ball a long way, but your game needs control and consistency.

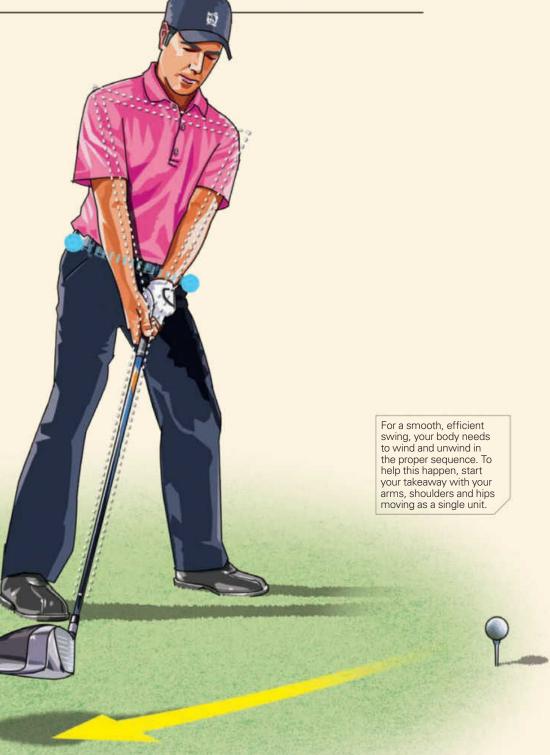
3 MOVES FOR BETTER ACCURACY

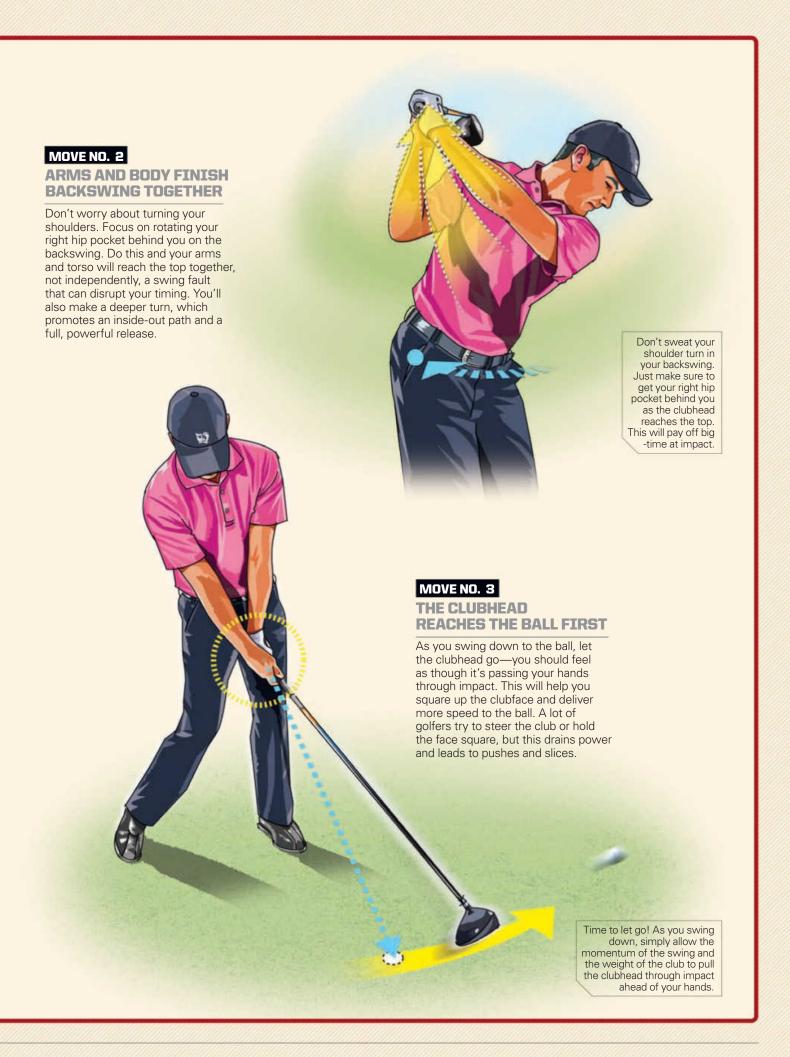
Let's say you've studied your stats from last season, and accuracy off the tee is your Achilles' heel. Sure, bombing and gouging works for Bubba, but you know you'd score better if you could keep the ball in play more often. Here are three keys to help you split the tightest fairways.

MOVE NO. 1

EVERYTHING STARTS BACK TOGETHER

Let your arms, shoulders and hips work as a single unit to take the clubhead away from the ball. If your arms move independently of the other three parts, the path of the club will be overly steep. If your shoulders move prematurely, you risk pulling the clubhead too far to the inside. Syncing up all three pieces lets you start the club back on plane.





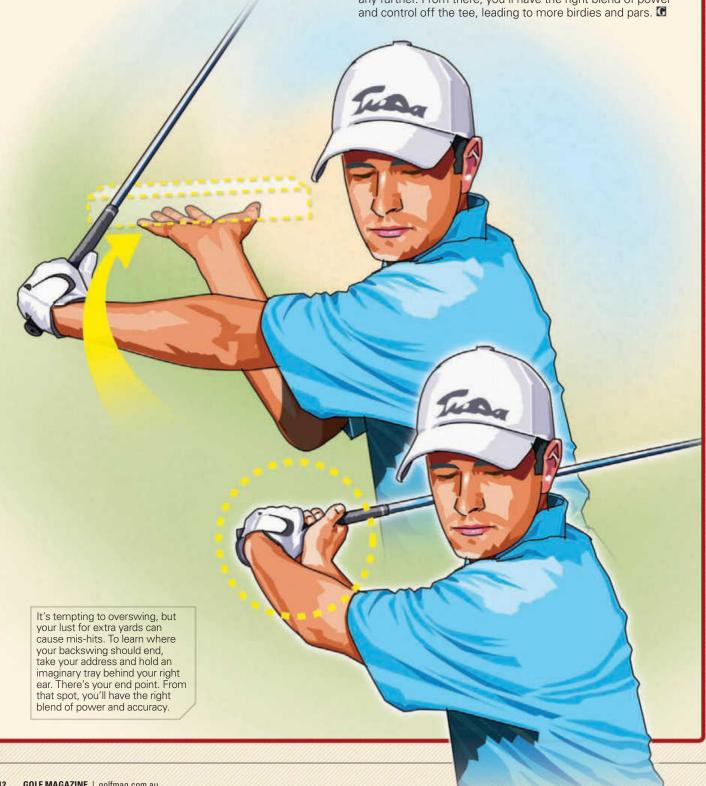
HIGH Handicapper

You have potential but must fix some fundamental swing flaws.

FIND THE BACKSWING

Most swing errors happen when you push your backswing beyond its natural limits—that is, when you try to make a turn that's too big for your physique. You not only lose your posture and balance but your timing, too. Here's a simple range drill to help you find the perfect backswing length for your level of flexibility.

Take your normal setup, and without turning your hips, raise your right arm as though you were holding a tray or a pizza box. Hold it as far behind your right ear as your shoulder will allow. Now join your left hand (and the club) to your right hand. This is your natural turn! No need to go any further. From there, you'll have the right blend of power



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- Low Handicappers
- Straight Hitters
- Power Hitters
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It's Not You, Donald, It's Me

WILLIAM IEFFERSON CLINTON 42nd President of the United States February 10, 2015

) DEAR DONALD,

What could be a better time than playing golf with you? Not much! Thanks for all the fun rounds and interesting—and way-off-the-record conversations we've had along the way, my man. You know what conversations I'm talking about. Remember, they cut both ways.

I so appreciate the membership you gave me at Trump National Westchester when Winged Foot was showing me no love. You know how to dole out a floating mulligan, brother! I might be the king of the do-over, but you're at least a high prince. Anyway, your place is so much more fun than Winged Foot. Food's better, too.

Maybe someday you'll get a Tour event at Westchester. TV would eat up that waterfall on 13. You're right: more magnificent than Niagara Falls. And what a locker room. Joe Torre, Rudy Giuliani, your pavement guy, you, me, all down the line. A murderer's row.

That's why I have such pain in my heart right now. Sorry, Donald, but I have to resign my membership at Trump Westchester. Don't pay attention to my quotes in the press release going out today—we both know how those things go. Truth is, Hillary's making me do it.

I tried to tell her that it's an honorary membership, that it wasn't costing us—or the American taxpayer—one thin dime. But she said something about "optics" and all the extra security needed when I play. When I told her regular people don't care what rich guy belongs to what club, she put her hands on her ears and started wailing like a siren. Hillary's smart as a whip, but she's got that move. Plus, she's kind of annoyed about some of the things you've been saying, like 'I'm one of the great woman abusers of all time.' I know what you're doing, but was that

As Trump and Hillary edge closer to a November election showdown, here's the 'Dear Donald' letter that Bill might feel compelled to write



necessary? Anyway, you might find it useful to keep in mind this gem from Warren Buffett: "If a cop follows you for 500 miles, you're going to get a ticket." As you like to say, You understand.

It's actually looking like it might be you and Hillary in the general. After Election Day, you can go back to things you actually care about. If I can help when it's over, let me know.

This one's free: On November 9, after John King and Brit Hume put away their red-and-blue maps and magic fingers, you take a nice young pro from the Asian Tour named Mohammad Siddikur Rahman out for a round at Trump Doral. He grew up and lives in Bangladesh, found his way to golf working at a club in Dhaka, and he's the best Muslim golfer in the world. You fly him to Miami on your plane, play 18 on the Blue Monster with him, and invite CNN, FOX and Golf Channel to follow along, right through lunch. People will quickly forget that ban-the-Muslims lunacy. I'm giving you a mulligan on that one.

Reading more tea leaves here (my hobby), I doubt you're going to get

a British Open at Trump Turnberry. The old bushy-eyebrow crowd at the R&A won't get you, and the new, young, grow-the-game progressives there even less so. You have a better chance, but still remote, of getting a Ryder Cup at Trump Scotland. In theory it can be bought, though

maybe not by you.

The really important thing for you now is to make sure you get the US Women's Open at Trump Bedminster next year, as you're scheduled to do. No major blowups between now and Election Day and you'll be fine. The USGA will take more of a hit from taking it away from you than by letting you keep it. And if that event goes well, your dream will come true: You'll get the US Open, men's division. That's the good news. The bad news is that it will be in 2027, at the earliest. You'll be in your eighties, just like Hillary and me! But your whole golf business will get a lift from it, and that will be fabulous for your children and grandchildren.

And what about your next move? This campaign shows how good you really are at reality TV, so my advice is to stick with it. I'm thinking Extreme Makeover, Trump-style! You take a group of dead-end kids and give them the *Trading Places* treatment. You make them members at your clubs, you personally teach them how to talk, what fork to use, how to play golf, get them into Fordham or Wharton or what have you. Every week, one of the kids gets fired off the show by finishing last in some competition, but as a consolation prize the failed contestant gets to caddie for you. Just think about it.

Couple of final things, for now, anyway. I know you'll be tempted to share this letter with the press. Please don't. Also, please consider my resignation temporary. If I've learned one thing in my nearly 70 years, this is it: It's all temporary.

Best wishes to you and Melania, Bill.

-Michael Bamberger











THE BALL THAT CHANGED THE BALL.

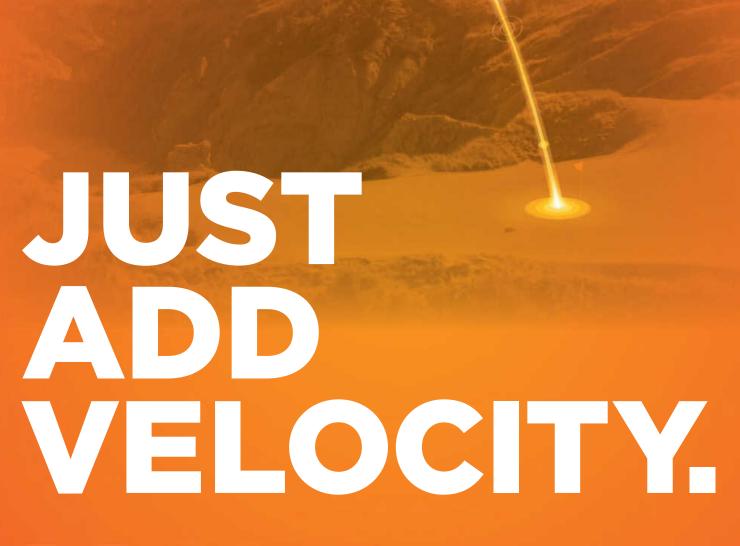
EXTREMELY SOFT, LONG AND EXCEPTIONAL CONTROL FROM 100 YARDS AND IN.

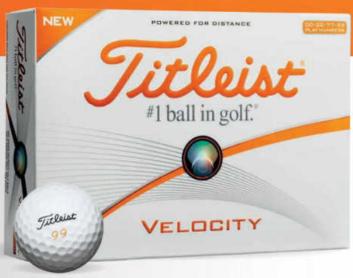
The new Chrome Soft is an even faster, low-spinning ball off the tee. But here's where it gets interesting. A new dual SoftFast Core generates more spin, for more control, from 100 yards and in. It's also easier to compress on iron shots because it's such a low compression ball. Plus, it's wrapped in a Tour Urethane cover, so it feels incredible. The new Chrome Soft is extremely long and soft, and it's easier to control. That's a game-changing kind of ball.

CHROME SOFT



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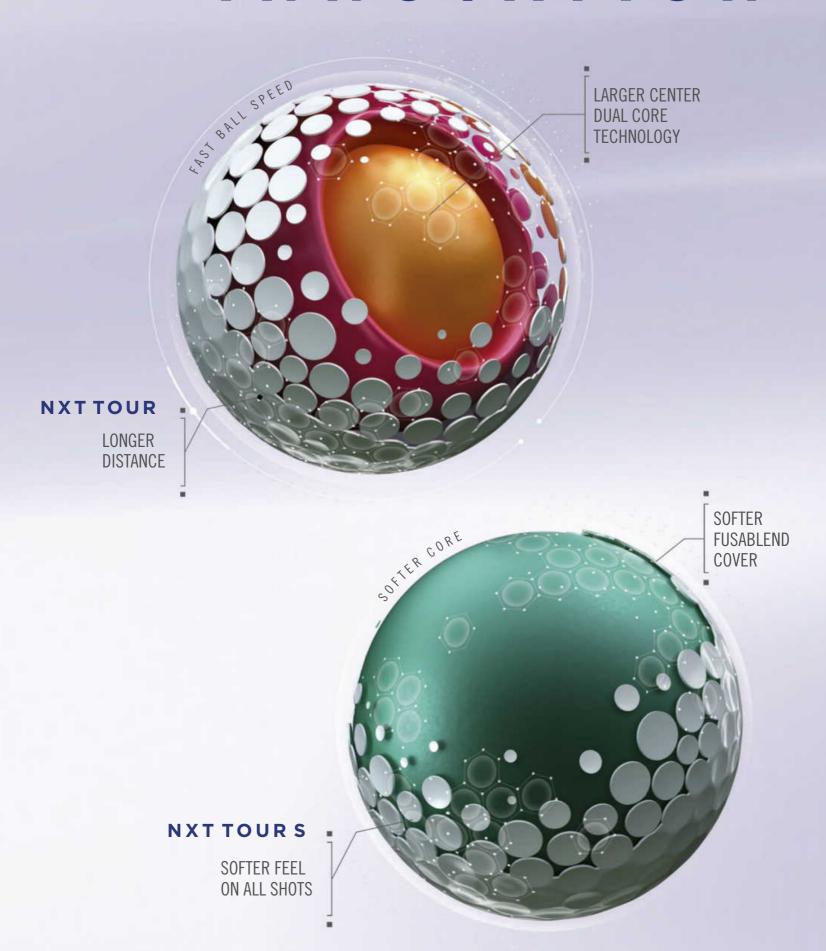
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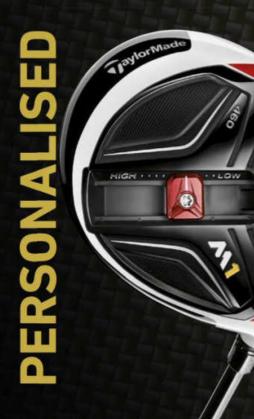






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DNIENIS

MARCH 2016 #325

COVER STORY

INTERVIEW



TEXAS HOLD 'EM

Steve Keipert looks at the World Golf Championships-Dell Match Play and the first meeting for 2016 of golf's 'Big Four' -Jordan Spieth, Rory McIlroy, Jason Day and Rickie Fowler.

STATS MAN







TRAVEL & COURSES

COURSE REVIEW: RACV ROYAL PINES RESORT

One of Australian golf's highest-profile (but most-needed) redesigns is now complete for professionals and amateurs alike to savour, writes Steve Keipert.

MY FAVOURITE COURSES

ROD PAMPLING

The former Australian Masters champion stays loyal to the courses he's succeeded on in his top-ten layouts.



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One of the game's foremost mental coaches reveals his ten rules you must follow to be a better player.

HORRIBLE LIES

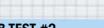


EQUIPMENT

CLUB TEST #1

64 CALLAWAY XI **DRIVER**

Our testers had mixed fe about the look but liked this driver performed.



CLUB TEST #2

76 TAYLORMADE M2 RO

If you're looking for forgiveness set of irons, our testers might ha found the irons for you.



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THE old chestnut about allowing Tour professionals to wear shorts has bobbed up again, but this time the players who like the idea have an ally in European Tour chief Keith Pelley.

The European Tour has opened the door to pros who want to wear shorts by allowing players to wear them during practice rounds and pro-am events. Given the presence of the Tour in the Middle East and Asia, it only makes sense to allow players the option of more comfort in a pair of shorts.

Jordan Spieth and Rory Mollroy have already given the move by the European Tour the thumbs up.

"I think it's awesome," Spieth said. "I think it will be something that I would love to see on the PGA Tour, as well. Guys seem to all love it over here. And most of the guys that are really talking highly of it are the older guys oddly enough. Yeah, I think it's a great move."

McIlroy was equally keen: "I like it. I think it's a good idea to let guys wear shorts in practice rounds. I probably just need a couple more weeks in the sun to get my legs out in public! If it gets hot, I think it's a good idea."

But Spieth's hopes of the trend of bare-legged pros infiltrating the US Tour have already been shot down by PGA Tour headquarters.

"The PGA Tour's policy remains unchanged. Players are required to wear long pants when playing practice, pro-am and official competition rounds," a PGA Tour statement said.

None of the men's professional Tours condone players wearing shorts in tournament rounds, but you can be sure that the next time the mercury starts hitting the high 30s the shorts question will be asked again ... just as it has been on and off now for more than 30 years.

Yes, there have been calls for change from within the playing ranks since the early 1980s. In fact, back in 1983 one player - Forrest Fezler - even staged a one-man protest against during the US Open, a USGA event.

Knowing the USGA did not have a policy against the wearing of shorts,

Fezler stashed a pair of shorts in his golf bag as he headed out for the final round at Oakmont. After putting out on the 17th green, he slipped into a nearby port-a-loo, discarded his trousers and slipped on a pair of navy blue shorts.

Fezler walked onto the 18th tee to a mixture of strange looks and a few cheers. There might have even been one or two wolf-whistles. He finished the hole in his shorts before heading to the clubhouse and changing back into his trousers. He was not disqualified but the USGA moved immediately to ban the wearing of shorts in their Open.

Fast forward to 2004 and pros wearing shorts was a talking point again as Laura Davies accepted an invitation to play in the ANZ Championship – a tournament co-sanctioned by the Australasian and European Tours – at Horizons Resort on New South Wales' Lower North Coast.

Of course, women on the LPGA and Ladies European Tours play in shorts all the time. But Davies was reminded by officials early in tournament week that she would have to wear trousers.

With temperatures reaching 40 degrees during the pro-am, the trousered Englishwoman didn't acclimatise well and she was quite obviously cooked before the tournament started and missed the cut.

It would have been unfair for her to wear shorts when the men couldn't but common sense, not tradition, should have prevailed in such hot conditions, just as it should have the thousands of times since when heat has been an issue.

I have heard several argue against pros wearing shorts in the name of tradition. One American commentator even suggested he didn't want to see golf pros, the best players in the game, looking like weekend hackers. Personally, I don't think there is any danger of Spieth, Rory, Jason Day or Adam Scott and co. ever looking like a hacker.

I reckon pros should be given the option of wearing shorts. If it's hot, free the pins, let those legs see light and allow pros to play in comfort ... just like the rest of us.



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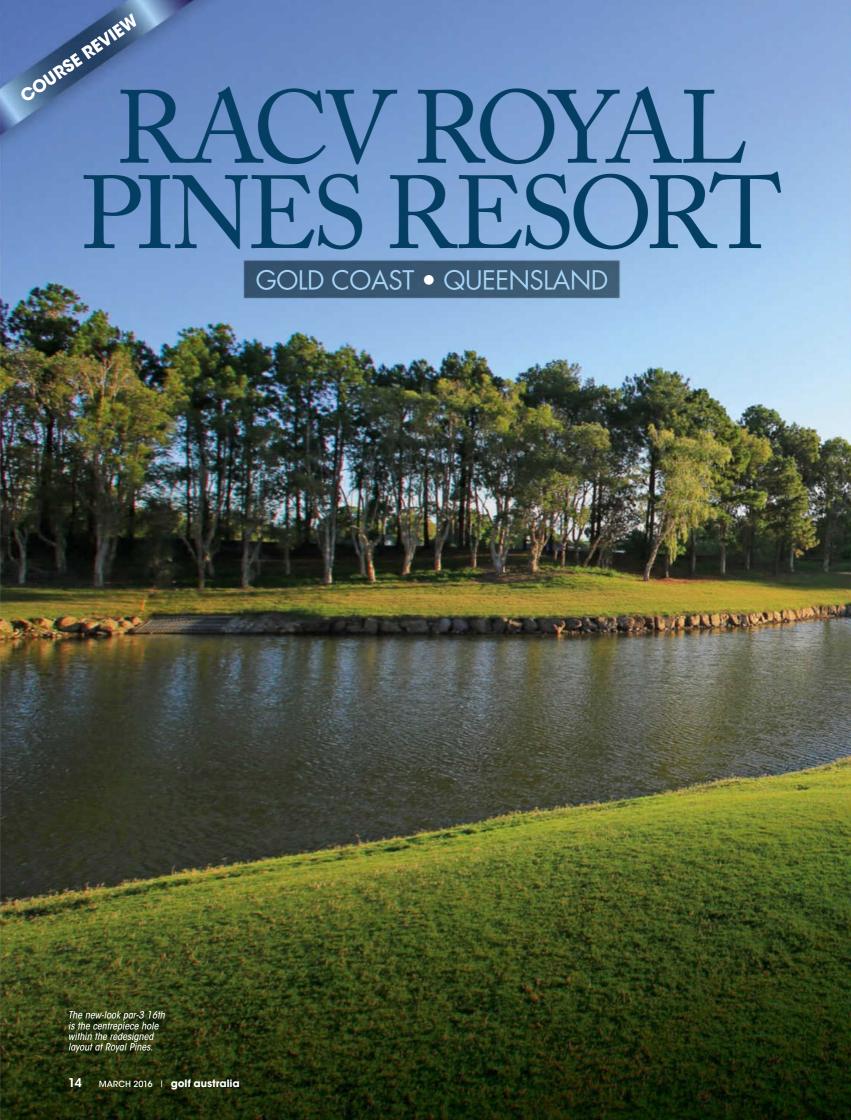
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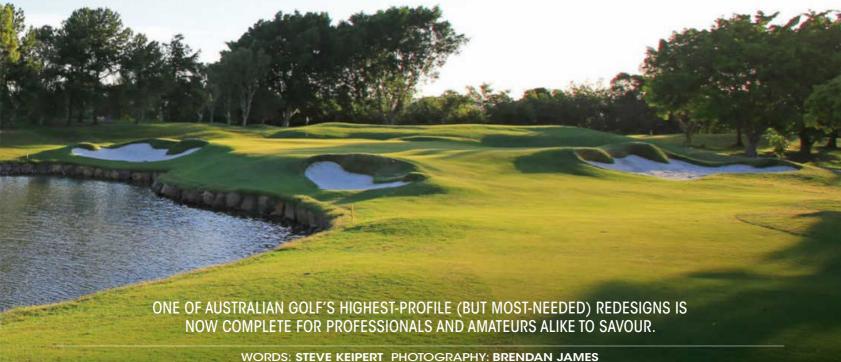
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MAR **APR** APR MAY JUN 27 04 The Grange The Lakes **Noosa Springs** Huntingdale St. Michael's Commonwealth Royal Queensland Sunshine Coast Melbourne Sydney Adelaide Melbourne Sydney Brisbane AUG JUL 21 29 SEP 05 SFP 21 OCT 13 OCT NOV 14 Concord The Brisbane Royal Adelaide Avondale Manly The Western Yarra Yarra Sydney **Golf Club** Sydney Australian Melbourne Sydney Brisbane Perth

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t's been a mighty transformation for the championship course at RACV Royal Pines Resort these past couple of years, a nine-bynine renovation of a golf course that was formerly little more than a pleasant walk on a flat, parkland site next to the Nerang River and in the shadows of an enviable resort complex.

The resort is still just as desirable, however now the 27-hole golf course is equally so, as witnessed at the Australian PGA Championship last December and, more recently, the RACV Ladies Masters last month. What was previously a course characterised by large, flat and relatively open greens - with bunkers to match - now has more firepower and architectural nuances. Graham Marsh undertook the job, one of the more high-responsibility projects in Australian golf in recent years given that the elite male and female professionals would compete on his course, and elevated what was a straightforward and largely uninteresting layout into one of the premier resort courses in the land.

And it was no easy task. The timeframe was tight, with work only able to begin once the girls had left town in February and needing to be complete by the time the boys lobbed in December. Both years of the redevelopment – 2014 for the front nine and last year for the inward half - saw the construction phase take place through the autumn and early part of winter before a growing-in period from late winter and throughout spring. The just-completed Gold nine was not played until the first players arrived for the PGA Championship practice rounds.

This split approach to the project also allowed Royal Pines to always have 18 holes open, the unworked nine pairing with the resort's third nine across the road to give everyday golfers a full menu. But now the work is done and the place is flourishing in full once more, with a fully revitalised main course and sneaky-good third nine that ought to be played just as much as the tournament layout.

Royal Pines began life as a 27-hole resort in 1990 with the original



course designed by Japanese course architect Tomojiro Maruyama. Six years later, a fourth nine was added to complete what became known as the West course. A further six years on and the West was closed, shrinking to nine holes again. Marsh's design firm was engaged to pen that new nine on the western side of Ross St, which saw the three nines renamed as Aroona, Binnowee and Wangara. RACV purchased the resort in 2008 with a return to the Gold, Green and Blue names, the tournament layout comprising the Green and Gold nines.

Given his history with Royal Pines and his proven ability to transform less-than stellar sites into thriving courses, Marsh was a logical choice to perform the re-do, despite a wide net being cast across the golf-architecture fraternity. He openly stated a desire to "craft a design that would bring more of the field into contention" during the resort's two annual professional tournaments, while retaining the inherent playability for the remaining 50 weeks of the year.

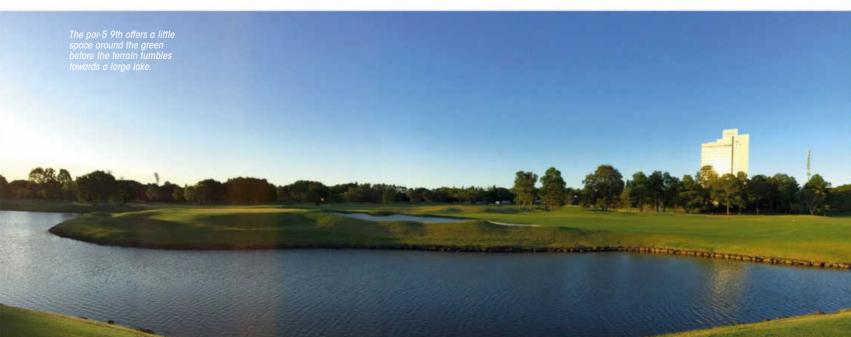
"Prior to construction commencing in 2013, my evaluation of the old Royal Pines layout was that it offered far too much advantage for the long hitters and precious little opportunity for the more competent ball-strikers to exhibit their skills," Marsh said. "Quality shots were not rewarded and power hitting was being given a free pass. The excessive

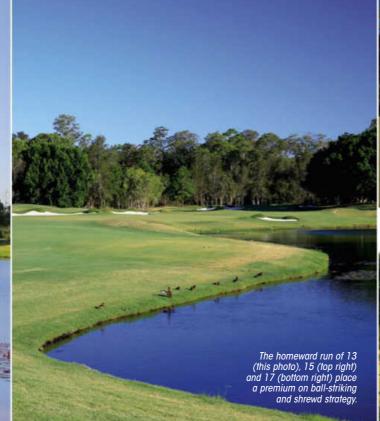
out-of-play shallow bunkering was the main culprit. Previously the course devoted 2.2 hectares to bunkers; the redesign reflects only 0.9ha of space to sand. Less than half, yet far more challenging for the skilled golfer.

"There is no denying in most sports that a talented, powerful person will always have the drop over one of equal talent but less power," Marsh added. "In the modern world of professional golf this can translate into a distance advantage of upward of 50 metres on the tee ball alone. The Royal Pines redesign is an attempt to level the playing field.

"The redesign is by no means an attempt to take the long hitters out of the game. It is simply putting them on notice that to score well on Royal Pines they must show far more aptitude than in the past. They will always have an advantage but it will not be dictated by length alone."

Certain elements of the original Green/Gold course Marsh could not alter. The site is still almost pancake-flat and the flow of the waterways within the course means there was little if any opportunity to re-route fairways. So instead the man who displayed savviness as a player drew upon that same quality once again as a designer, giving shape and far greater definition to the existing canvas and better utilising the natural features of the site. For instance, holes bordering the lakes now place









the water more in play, such as the short par-4 8th, which presents far more options than its previous iteration did. Elsewhere, it's the contours of the bunkers, the greens or both that trouble golfers' grey matter. There are now as many humps and bumps as a classic links scape. In short, without drastically overhauling the routing, Marsh has allowed Royal Pines to flourish by reimagining its flat, featureless targets to reveal far more character.

Three holes on the Gold nine received special attention. The redesigned 13th (as it plays in tournaments) has a new back tee on the long par-4 that creates a far more awkward driving angle across the lake dominating the tee shot. Numerous players at the Australian PGA Championship rinsed their drives (some more than once), but it's a tee that will see only occasional use as everyday golfers will usually be confined to the original tees, which are set closer to the adjoining houses to limit any impact on them.

The short 16th is a gem of a par-3 with a pond short and left of a green characterised by a tier that splits the high right side from the low left half. It is perhaps the prime example of the flair Marsh exposed from Royal Pines. The 18th was another hole to turn heads at the PGA. Fresh off a seven-hole play-off at the 2014 championship that dragged

the outcome towards irrelevance due to the lacklustre green complex, competitors last December were instead greeted by a raised green with plenty of depth but little width, plus run-offs and sunken bunkers lurking beside it. For a 426-metre par-4, it is an ominous target whether there's a professional trophy or merely a few dollars in side bets among resort golfers on the line.

However some restrictions remain, largely due to the dimensions and nature of the site. One example is the way the four par-5s all run across the same, central part of the property – the 3rd and 12th heading north and the 9th and 15th running south in four parallel, treelined green ribbons. Yet when you consider the original layout and the limitations Marsh faced, the renovated version is a sparkling design achievement – by all involved with the project.

"The past two years has been an unbelievable experience," Royal Pines' course superintendent Lincoln Coombes told the Australian Golf Course Superintendents Association ahead of the Australian PGA. "When you look at what's happened here – a full 18-hole redevelopment and hosting two major PGA tournaments – it's pretty special. It has been great to be a part of."

And now we all get to be part of it, too.

→ FACT FILE

THE COURSE

LOCATION: Ross St, Benowa, Queensland.

CONTACT: 1800 886 880; (07) 5597 8700.

WEBSITE: www.racv.com.au

DESIGNERS: Tomojiro Maruyama (1990); Graham Marsh

(2015).

SLOPE RATINGS: Men: 141/132/126/123; women:

PLAYING SURFACES: Bermuda 328 (greens), Wintergreen couch (tees and fairways), Greenlees Park couch (rough).

COURSE SUPERINTENDENT: Lincoln Coombes.

PGA PROFESSIONALS: David Hogben, Mark Gibson, Loic

133/124 (for Green/Gold course combination).

MEMBERSHIPS: RACV Royal Pines Resort offers fiveand seven-day unlimited golf memberships. Five-day memberships are \$2,960, or \$2,200 for Auto Club members; the seven-day fees are \$3,700 and \$2,775, respectively. Fees include the compulsory cart hire. ACCOMMODATION: The five-star RACV Royal Pines Resort

GREEN FEES: \$150. Discounts are offered to RACV auto

club members (\$87) and in-house guests (\$98), as well

as for the public after 1pm (\$83) and after 2pm (\$73).

Truet, Nancy Harvey and David Merriman.

THE RESORT

includes 333 rooms, plus award-winning restaurants and bars, a day spa, gymnasium, tennis courts, children's playground, swimming pools plus conference and event spaces. Shuttle buses are available for guests five times daily to Broadbeach and Surfers Paradise.

CORPORATE GOLF: Royal Pines operates numerous corporate golf events throughout the year. Contact the resort for full details.

PACKAGES: The resort offers a wide range of options, including the Stay & Play package, which starts from \$369 per night for two people and includes buffet breakfasts and 18 holes of golf.



WHY THE FIRST 30CM IS SO IMPORTANT

ONE of the most common mistakes every amateur golfer makes occurs in the first 30 centimetres of the swing.

It all starts with the backswing, and how you take the club away from address sets a chain reaction in motion that, hopefully, results in a good shot. Jack Nicklaus and Rory McIlroy are just two greats who often refer to the takeaway as the most important part of the swing.

The premise is a simple one.

Beginning the swing correctly makes it so much easier to set the club properly at the top of the backswing. A poor takeaway leads to many

compensations and extra movements throughout the remainder of the swing, which lead to a mis-hit.

The worst mistake is swinging the club away with your hands. The world's best ball-strikers, like Sergio Garcia here, use their big muscles to start their swing. Sergio has initiated his backswing using his torso and shoulders, not his wrists, hands or forearms.

Note how Sergio's clubhead is low to the ground and just inside the target line. Remember, the swing is an arc, so this position is perfect to get the club set properly at the top of the swing.



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- Full buffet breakfast
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RACV Royal Pines Resort

DAN CULLEN

1914-2016

A LEGEND of Australian golf and the longest serving member of the Australian PGA, Dan Cullen recently passed away after a short illness. He was 101.

"It's a sad day for the PGA and the golf industry, we've lost a doyen of the game and the membership," said **Brian Thorburn**, chief executive of the PGA.

"Dan contributed greatly to the sport of golf as both a club and tournament professional, not to mention his bravery and heroics during World War II. He will be sadly missed and our thoughts and sympathies are with the Cullen family at this time." Born in Bunbury, Western Australia, in 1914, Cullen held a well-earned reputation as a respected club professional and capable golfer. He joined the PGA in 1932 after completing his traineeship at the Western Australian Golf Club under the guidance of club professional, **Eric Alberts**, before moving to Cottesloe Golf Club in Perth.

In 1937 and 1938 Cullen won the West Australian Open and following this in 1939 defeated South African **Bobby Locke** in an exhibition game at Royal Perth Golf Club.

Cullen credited Locke, one of South Africa's most successful professional golfers, for

developing his career as a professional.

In 1941 Cullen enlisted in the RAAF and was deployed to Europe and for three years piloted Lancaster bombers – a job that held less than a one-in-four chance of surviving 30 missions. Incredibly, Cullen piloted 32 operational flights over Europe and survived.

On a routine bombing run over Friedrichshafen in April 1944, Cullen had a narrow escape when a shell attack by the enemy crippled his plane and injured his crew. These heroics earned Cullen the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) medal.

Upon returning home to Australia in 1945, Cullen was appointed club professional at Sydney's Roseville Golf Club before moving to St Michael's Golf Club.

Between 1948 and 1960, Cullen served as director and chairman of the New South Wales PGA, prior to his appointment as president of the PGA, which he held from 1951-1955.





(h)

GOLF AUSTRALIA COMPETITION WINNERS

JANUARY PHOTO CAPTION COMPETITION



We had some witty entries to our photo of French trick shot artist **Romain Bechu** balancing a ball on his wedge. The best entry according to our judges came from **Jeff Cutler** of **Tallwoods Village, NSW**, with: "Assis! Fantastique! I finally found a ball that obeys French."

Congratulations Jeff, you win a pair of adidas Tour 360X shoes worth \$149.





GOLF AUSTRALIA PHOTO CAPTION COMPETITION



THE great **Gary Player** has played plenty of shots from odd places in his career but none from the back of camel ... that is until now. What is your caption to go with this photo?

Submit your caption on the entry form found on our website (not in the comment box) for the accompanying photo and

the best entry judged by *Golf Australia*'s editors will win a pair of 2015 adidas Tour 360X shoes, worth \$149.

The Tour 360X shoes continue the evolution of the Tour 360 family. With its Tour-proven performance and stability unquestioned, this model features increased cushioning and comfort.



For more information visit the website www.adidasgolf.com or call 1800 700 011







TO ENTER: Visit www.golfaustralia.com.au and click on the 'WIN' icon to submit your entry. Entries close **March 23**. The winner will be published in the May 2016 issue of Golf Australia.

SIGN UP & WIN CALLAWAY BALLS

Have you caught up with our weekly online magazine, Golf Australia Express? If you haven't here's what you will find.

Golf Australia Express is e-mailed to more than 34,000 subscribers every Wednesday morning, with all the latest news and results from the golf world. We are also the first to preview each week's upcoming tournaments on the PGA Tour, European Tour and LPGA Tour with detailed observations and tips from our panel of experts. There's also a quirky look at the

game with our 'Numbers' and Quotes Of The Week columns, while we showcase the latest equipment, tips from Tour stars and quality Australian golf courses.

This month, if you sign up and subscribe to Golf Australia Express, you will go into the draw to win a dozen Callaway Chrome Soft golf balls (visit au.callawaygolf.com).

The latest version of Callaway's Chrome Soft ball promises exceptional distance, more control into the green and incredibly soft feel.

To subscribe to Golf Australia Express, go to www.golfaustralia.com.au

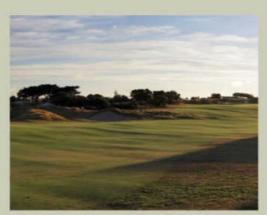




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MILLIONTH 'SCRAMBLER' LOOMS

CERTAIN things from 1992 are easy to remember (Shane Warne's Test debut against India, the West Coast Eagles taking the AFL trophy out of Victoria for the first time, Paul Keating's first year as prime minister) and others we try to forget (Billy Ray Cyrus' "Achy Breaky Heart" was the year's biggest song).

It was also the year an institution in Australian golf began: the Holden Scramble. This year marks the 25th staging of the annual teams ambrose event that has drawn millions of golfers – literally – to compete. Just as 2016 marks the Scramble's silver anniversary, it will also be the year when the one millionth 'Scrambler' graces the fairways.

And the PGA of Australia and Holden will mark the milestone by giving that player and his or her three teammates return flights to the USA to attend the PGA Tour's season-ending Tour Championship in Atlanta in September. The prize also includes accommodation and

entry into the tournament.

The PGA is sporting a new 25th anniversary logo for the Holden Scramble (*pictured*) and chief executive **Brian Thorburn** is justifiably pleased about the event's duration.

"The PGA of Australia is extremely proud of the success and longevity of the Holden Scramble and the position the brand holds in the Australian golf industry," Thorburn said. "The Holden Scramble continues to cement itself as Australia's largest and most successful pro-amateur teams event and this could not have been achieved without the support of PGA professionals across the country who run the events.

"The relationship we've formed with GM Holden has assisted the PGA grow the game of golf at grassroots level in all corners of Australia and we greatly appreciate the support they have given us over the past 25 years."

In 2016, the Holden Scramble entry fee is

\$39.50 per player and includes a Callaway cap and tee gift, valued at \$35. The winning team from each local event in Australia will compete at a regional final in October and ultimately contend for a position at the 2016 Holden Scramble Championship Final, which once again will be held on Queensland's Sunshine Coast.

The PGA is excited to begin the rollout of online entries and payment for participants. Online entry is via the Holden Scramble website and participants will simply need four player names (with GolfLink numbers), four e-mail addresses and a credit card.

Contact your nearest golf club or visit www.holdenscramble.com.au for further details. Meanwhile, 'like' the Scramble on Facebook and upload your team photo for a chance to win a weekend of accommodation on the Sunshine Coast, meaning you won't have to qualify for the Championship Final to head to the Sunshine Coast.





IT'S not hard to see why Noosa Springs Resort has become one of Queensland's most popular golf destinations since it opened for play in 1999.

The Sunshine Coast course is laid out on 50 hectares of bushland on the north shore of beautiful Lake Weyba and is just five minutes' drive from the cosmopolitan hub of the Sunshine Coast – Hastings Street at Noosa Heads.

The **Graham Papworth**-designed par-72 course takes you on a journey across gently rolling terrain, through rainforest pockets, along edges of lakes and through Bloodwood forests before breaking out into open plains bordered by imposing stands of melaleuca.

At 6,189 metres from the championship markers, Noosa Springs is far from being a monster. But it is a layout that demands attention to strategy and correct club selection. Papworth has made sure he doesn't intimidate those casual players, who might be treating themselves to a relaxing holiday round by offering four sets of tees to play from. Despite the presence of water on a dozen holes, he has also made it possible to carefully negotiate your way around the hazards without too much difficulty.

Noosa Springs has some stunning holes, especially on the outward nine. The first of these is the 339-metre par-4 2nd hole, which borders a national park down the left edge of the fairway. Two staggered fairway traps at 200 and 240 metres from the tee can also pose some problems for the misdirected tee shot. Heading to the green, Lake Weyba comes into view well left of the wide putting surface, which is protected by two bunkers short.

A trio of par-4s - the 5th, 6th and 7th - are played around the edge of a large lake and offer plenty of opportunities to lose a ball if you attack the course too aggressively. For example, the 5th hole measures just 329 metres from the back markers but a long drive cutting across the edge of the lake to find the end of the almost Z-shaped fairway will leave a chip shot to the green. It must be a good drive, though, one that carries at least 220 metres across the nearest point to clear the hazard.

A highlight of any round at Noosa Springs is the quality of the playing surfaces. The awardwinning course maintenance team have an environmentally friendly attitude to keeping the layout in impeccable condition.

WANT TO PLAY NOOSA SPRINGS?

Members of the Qantas Golf Club are invited to compete in the 2016 Qantas Golf Club Challenge this month at Noosa Springs.

The two-person ambrose event will be played on March 11 with Qantas Golf Club members set to experience one of Queensland's finest resort courses, including lunch, drinks and prizes, for just \$129 per person.

Plus the winning team on the day will win an all-expenses paid trip to play in the 2016 Qantas Golf Club Challenge Final to be held at Clearwater Golf Resort in Christchurch, New Zealand from December 6 to 9, including flights, accommodation and golf.

The event is open to all golfers (individuals will be paired with another member) but participants must hold a valid Golf Australia handicap to be eligible to win the trip to New Zealand.

You can play some of the best courses like Noosa Springs with the Qantas Golf Club Challenge. Find out more at qantasgolfclub. com/challenge





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DAVID HOWELL

THE FORMER AUSTRALIAN PGA CHAMPION ON 'STARSKY & HUTCH', DAVID CAMERON AND USAIN BOLT.

1. When did you first shoot under par?I shot 70 at Broome Manor when I was 14.

2. What has been the highlight of your

Winning the 2006 BMW PGA. However, playing in my first winning Ryder Cup in 2004 was a lifelong dream.

3. What has been the best shot of your career to date?

An 18-inch putt to win my first tournament in six years in 2004. I still remember how nervous I was, thinking, 'If you miss this, maybe you'll never win again.'

3. One mulligan you'd like to have?

My second on the last of the 2014 China Open. Missing the fairway with a 7-iron on a lay-up; had I hit that fairway I'd have been in a play-off, at the very worst.

4. Favourite course in the world?

Augusta. Everything that goes with playing there in the tournament makes it a real treat.

5. Favourite UK course?

Loch Lomond. It's an underrated course.

6. Favourite hole in the world?

18th at St Andrews. Or the 1st. That piece of turf is something that any keen golfer should experience.

7. Favourite view in golf?

There's a tee at New South Wales Golf Club perched on the edge of Botany Bay, where Captain Cook landed.

8. Favourite club in the bag?

My putter. I've used it for ten years.

9. Favourite film?

'Starsky & Hutch' with Ben Stiller and Owen Wilson. I can't help but laugh at it.

10. Favourite musician or group?

I listen to music, but I know nothing about it.

11. Favourite sports team?

I'm known on Tour as the worst football supporter – I quote six teams as my favourite.

12. Favourite sportsman?

Usain Bolt. There is something pure about being the fastest man on the planet.

13. Favourite sportswoman?

Charley Hull. A lovely girl and an amazing talent

14. Any superstitions?

If I start with a cap on, I have to wear one for every shot. In the Ryder Cup at Kiawah Island the wind got Ray Floyd's cap on the 18th, so he took it off and I thought, 'He'll hit a bad shot,' and he did. That left a mark on me. 15. Favourite TV show? 'The Office'. 16. Favourite holiday destination? I don't really do holidays. I do too much travelling. 17. Dream foursome of non-professionals? David Cameron, Nigel Farage and Bill 18. Dream fourball of professionals? Palmer, Watson and Nicklaus. I've not played with any of them. 19. Who's your best mate on Tour? Mark Foster 20. What golf rule would you like to change? Ball moving on the green, but it has changed a bit now.





EURASIA TOUR IS BEST WAY AHEAD

What a breath of fresh air for golf Keith Pelley appears to be.

Reading his plan to take the European Tour to even more global locations than it does now makes for an exciting future for the game, especially here in Australia.

I think the sooner the European Tour swings through Australia for three or four events every year, the better it will be for the state of tournament golf in this country. It will also provide a more lucrative pathway for our upcoming pros to find their way on the global stage. We're already seeing it with Nathan Holman (pictured), kicking goals on that Tour as a result of his win at the Australian PGA, which was cosanctioned with the European Tour.

I think a 'World' or 'Eurasia' Tour is a viable alternative to the PGA Tour for players and will raise the standard and depth of events here in Australia. With Pelley in control in Europe, this might all happen sooner rather than later.

Geoff Turton, via e-mail



FILL YOUR DIVOTS

I write to you frustrated and bewildered after a long summer of hitting shots out of unfilled divots.

With embellishment, I reckon I have been faced with two dozen shots from unfilled divots across approximately 15 rounds during the past few months. The troubling thing for me is these unfilled divots have been encountered across a handful of different courses.

How hard is it people? Fill your divots. And if you don't, you have no right to complain about fairways being poorly presented.

Tony Wright Geelong, Victoria



LETTER OF THE MONTH ...

LAWN BOWLS BECKONS

I HAVE played with a long putter since I was 20 years old because I saw Peter Senior using one and, at the time, he was winning everything in Australia. It looked like something different and seemed to work.

I have been using one now for 24 years and play off a nine handicap. My putting is the best part of my game. I did not take up the long putter because I had the yips, I took it up because I liked it. It suited me and I enjoyed it.



I have no interest in using a standard putter because for me I have been using the broomstick since I started golf, so why should I change? It's not as if the thing works out the break and the speed for me, does it!

I can honestly say the R&A has just taken away my biggest strength in the game, which I am seriously thinking about giving away. Nice one R&A, well thought out! Bring on lawn bowls.

Graham Stewart
via e-mail



Want to get something off your chest? Let us know your opinion via e-mail to: golf@golfaustralia.com.au or send your letter to: Letters to the Editor, Golf Australia magazine, Level 6, Building A, 207 Pacific Hwy, St Leonards NSW 2065.

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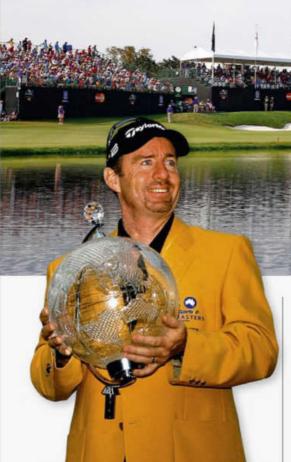
OUR **'LETTER OF THE**MONTH' WINNER
RECEIVES A DOZEN
CALLAWAY CHROME SOFT
PREMIUM GOLF BALLS





ROD PAMPLING

THE FORMER AUSTRALIAN MASTERS CHAMPION STAYS LOYAL TO THE COURSES HE'S SUCCEEDED ON AS WELL AS CHOOSING THE ONES HE LOVES IN HIS TOP-TEN LAYOUTS.



THE PAMPLING RÉSUMÉ

- Owns six professional victories worldwide, including two US PGA Tour titles.
- Shared fifth place at the 2005 Masters, his lone top-ten at a major.
- Obliterated The Australian Golf Club layout last November with a courserecord 61 in the final round of the Australian Open.
- Took the highly admiral step of personally thanking those tournament directors who granted him a sponsor invitation during his lean spells on the PGA Tour.

Bay Hill Club & Lodge Florida, USA

Bay Hill (pictured above) is just a very good test of golf and fortunately for me I managed to get a win out of the course ten years ago this month.

Cypress Point Club California, USA

I'm fortunate to get to play Cypress once, maybe twice a year. I certainly love that golf course - it's like going back in time. It's a little bit short for the modern game but they just keep it the same as when it was originally designed. The short holes have tricky greens, the long holes have not-so tricky greens, and that's the way golf was back in the day. And then you get out to the water holes along the coast. They're quite amazing.

Caboolture GC Caboolture, Queensland

It's my home course where I grew up playing and learned this crazy game. Caboolture is also where the PGA's Pampling Plate (the Queensland Trainee Match Play Championship) is held each year. The members are always good whenever I go back, wanting to know how I'm going.

Castle Pines GC Colorado, USA

Here and Bay Hill are the two courses where I won on the PGA Tour. They're good courses regardless of winning there - I still enjoy both - but the good memories make them all the more special. The International modified Stableford event at Castle Pines is sadly no longer part of the circuit.





New South Wales GC Sydney, NSW

New South Wales is just phenomenal. The scenery is amazing and again it's a classic course that isn't ridiculously designed. Being right on the coast, when the wind blows, well, good luck! Sometimes breaking 80 around that place is extremely difficult. But it's built to withstand the conditions.

Colonial CC

Texas, USA

Colonial (pictured left) is old-school. You look at it on paper and walk around there and you think you're going to shoot 30-under every time you play the tournament there, but invariably the winning score is in the teens below par. It's just a golf course that has stood the test of time and doesn't need silly pin spots to stop low scores.

Muirfield Village GC Ohio, USA

It's another classic course – a bit longer than Colonial – and is a great layout (pictured top). Jack Nicklaus did a great job designing that course. It's been a while since I've been there but I always enjoy playing the Memorial Tournament.

Victoria GC

Melbourne, Victoria

I love the way there's no big walks anywhere at Victoria. You hit it onto the green, you putt out and the next tee is right there. They've done a fantastic job with that golf course and it's another that gets very difficult in a little breeze. To me Kingston Heath is the same – I enjoy both visually, and it's the weather rather than the design that dictates how difficult the course plays.

The Australian GC Sydney, NSW

The Australian (pictured above) has obviously become a very good friend to me in the past few years [Pampling has finished second and fourth in the past two Australian Opens there].

I enjoy it and having the course record there is certainly a feather in the cap. The course just fits my eye really well so I'm definitely happy if they keep picking it to hold the Aussie Open, that's for sure.

The California GC California, USA

This is the best piece of golf property in the USA without water around it. It sits up there in San Francisco, not far from the airport, and I love it. It's trimmed up and is like playing a flatter version of Augusta National, but it's a favourite more because of the whole piece of property, which is just phenomenal. And the scenery you get from on top of some of those hills looking down towards the bay is spectacular.



BRYSON IS MORE THAN A 'MAD SCIENTIST'

IF YOU'VE been paying any sort of attention to golf at the (almost) highest level over the past year or so, then the wonderfully exotic name of Bryson DeChambeau must surely have flitted across your own personal radar screen. The current US Amateur and National Collegiate Athletic Association champion, this mildly eccentric iconoclast, is hard to miss.

At the age of only 22, DeChambeau's typical on-course garb is a dapper mixture of Ben Hogan and Beau Brummel. OK, so he's a little more colourful than the late, great Hogan ever was – greys, whites and dark blues were the "Wee Ice Man's" hues of choice – but the Scottish 'bunnet' (cap) is in place, forever co-ordinated with the rest of his outfit. DeChambeau has style, one of his own within an environment dominated by baseball caps and golf shoes that more and more resemble what America likes to call "sneakers". In that respect, he is a setter of trends, not a follower.

He can play too, as his runner-up finish behind Peter Senior at the recent (and last?) Australian Masters clearly illustrated. That was impressive enough – albeit in a less than stellar field – but 18 holes into the recent Abu Dhabi Championship on the European Tour, the name at the top of the leaderboard was not Spieth, McIlroy, Stenson or Fowler; it was DeChambeau.

But the quality of his shots – good as they clearly are – is not what one first notices when DeChambeau makes a swing. As Scotsman Russell Knox was moved to comment after partnering the young Californian in the final round in Abu Dhabi: "Bryson certainly does things his own way. A couple of times when he set-up to the ball I was asking myself if he was really going to hit it from there. But I like that he is different."

The root of DeChambeau's individuality is his application of the almost incomprehensible and endlessly complicated principles contained within 'The Golfing Machine', the cult-like instruction book written by Homer Kelley. A physics major during his abbreviated time at Southern Methodist University in Dallas – he left early when the school was suspended by the

NCAA because of recruiting irregularities that occurred before he arrived - DeChambeau has taken Kelley's teachings in a whole new direction. The most startling thing, of course, is that all of the irons in the DeChambeau bag - all the way from 3-iron to sand wedge - are 371/2 inches long, or the equivalent of a regular "They're all the same length," he explains. "Same lie angle, same shaft, just different loft. Same bounce configuration as well on each and every one of them. But it's four degrees of loft difference between them and it works pretty well. It helps me keep my same posture, same set-up, same everything and allows me to Bryson DeChambeau is set to turn professional in the coming months after one of the best amateur careers in recent times. perform quite nicely with my irons.

"My initial thinking was that there has to be a better way to play golf. So I chose this variation of the Golfing Machine where it allowed me to swing on the same plane. And when I did that, I realised I couldn't do it with a wedge and 3-iron because it would mean changing body motions. That doesn't make sense, so I said, "Why don't we make them all the same lie and angle and the same length?" So my coach and I went on this journey. It's been a great process and a great learning experience for me."

It is also one that has attracted a great deal of attention and, it must be acknowledged, praise. In Abu Dhabi, while DeChambeau wasn't looking, Rory McIlroy sneaked a wee shot with a couple of his clubs. After the American shot that 64 to claim the first-round lead, playing partner David Drysdale was moved to comment: "I thought I was playing with Jack Nicklaus." And two days after that, McIlroy had a different take following the dapper DeChambeau up the 9th fairway: "Now I know what it would have been like to play with Ben Hogan."

Hang on, though. For all his obvious promise, DeChambeau is far from the finished article. And nagging doubts – at least for this observer – remain about his unique method. For one thing, no devotee of the Golfing Machine has ever managed any kind of longevity on Tour. One thinks of Mac O'Grady – golf's ultimate eccentric – and the meteoric rise and demise of Bobby Clampett as examples of those who were perhaps too tied into Kelley's esoteric mix of formulas and equations.

And for another, while DeChambeau's long game has a hypnotically metronomic quality, his short game can seem fairly one-dimensional. The "sameness" he craves in his long game might not be the best way to go when it comes to the vital scoring shots inside 100 yards or so.

Still, the hope here is that DeChambeau will go his own way to the extent that he will continue to have a successful career. He seems sensible enough to achieve that. Speaking at the end of the Abu Dhabi event – where he finished equal 54th after shooting a third-round 78 in the company of McIlroy – he was both modest and realistic. In contrast with his comments three days earlier, when in a moment of unrealism he compared himself with Albert Einstein and George Washington. And not unfavourably.

"The last two rounds were not as good as I wanted," he said after a closing 72. "But that's the game. You can't always control all the

FIVE THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU

- He puts his golf balls in a bowl of Epsom salts to balance each one. He will then spin the ball and the out-of-balance one will wobble to where the low point or heavy side of the ball is due to the centre of gravity not being in the exact centre.
- He will only wear the Scottish 'bunnet' cap during tournament rounds.
- He likes tightrope walking in his spare time
- He has the ability to sign his name backwards with his left hand.
- DeChambeau grips the club in his palms, not the fingers, like 99.9 percent of elite players.

variables. I'm a bit disappointed but it was nice to play with Rory. It wasn't nerves that got me; it was adrenaline. I have to learn how to control that a bit better.

"I learned more from the 78 than the 64.1"Il look back and try to find out what changed. It was just too much adrenaline. I pumped a couple of wedges over greens, bogeyed too many par-5s and three-putted too much. I didn't putt nearly as well as I did the first day. And when you do all that it's easy to shoot 78 out there.

"I was ten-under-par after 20 holes. So I can do it. I know that. What I need to figure out is controlling the situation when I get myself up there, when the pressure is on and when I'm playing with the best players. But this was great experience. Next time I'll be more comfortable. It was a great learning experience."

In the short term, that study will take DeChambeau to Augusta National for a Masters debut next month, which is his reward for winning the US Amateur – he is only the fifth player to hold that title and the NCAA simultaneously. One day after he putts out on the 18th green though, he will be a professional. It is to be hoped that he finds somewhere to play for pay before too long. Golf needs personality and colour and DeChambeau provides both.

JOHN HUGGAN is an award-winning golf writer who is widely respected for his insightful commentary on the game. Follow John on Twitter @johnhuggan







AUSTRALIA'S TOP ROYAL TURNS 125

ROYAL Melbourne Golf Club reaches a significant milestone on May 22 when it celebrates its 125th anniversary.

Until the club was formed at a meeting on that day in a city hotel in 1891, golf was not part of the Victorian or Australian mainland sporting landscape. Contemporary newspapers carried results and reports of horse racing, football, lawn tennis, live pigeon shooting, bowling, baseball, cycling, yachting, lacrosse, athletics and boxing but the "Scottish game" was but a distant memory.

It was first played in Tasmania in the 1820s and in Sydney and Melbourne 20 years later, but the gold rush intervened and, according to Joseph Johnson, author of the club's centenary history: "There are few things that will drag a dedicated Scot from the links – the fact that nuggets of gold are lying on the ground not far away is one of them."

The impetus came from a group of influential men of Scottish heritage, including James Graham, John Bruce, James McBain and Hugh Playfair, who felt the time was ripe for a comeback and met at Scott's Hotel at the western end of Collins Street to do something about it. Their timing could not have been better. The booming economy was yet to crash because of the extravagances and greed of the Land Boom and Bruce is said to have had no problems recruiting new members. "I want 15 guineas for a golf club," he told them. The reply was often: "I haven't the faintest idea what a golf club is but here is your 15 guineas."

Sixteen of the original 100 members were sitting or former parliamentarians, the first patron was Lord Hopetoun, the Victorian Governor, and the rest were businessmen, lawyers, doctors, graziers, pastoralists and senior civil servants. A few, including Bruce, had come up the hard way. He started out as an apprentice warehouseman in Ireland, sweeping the floors, and worked his way to the top as a businessman in Melbourne highly respected for his honesty and as the father of a future prime minister.

The 15-guinea (\$31.50) fee equated to about six weeks' pay for a working man but in hindsight it would have been a good investment, covering the first five years' subscription, later converted to life membership. The course was quickly laid out on land leased at Caulfield and club golf

resumed in Australia on a Saturday in July with a hearty lunch before an exhibition by Bruce and Playfair, the grandson of an R&A captain of the same name. Followed by a good gallery on horseback and on foot, Bruce won the 18-hole match by three holes in a little over two hours.

The course was laid by T.J. Findlay, a foundation member, and David Conacher, who had been a clubmaker at St Andrews, on land held by speculators who were also club members. In the era before cars it lay to the north of Caulfield railway station, which had served the racecourse on the other side of the tracks since 1859.

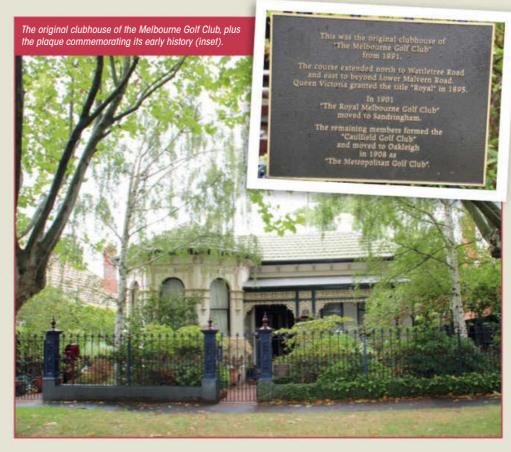
The clubhouse with a plaque attesting to its place in golf history still stands in Turner Street, Malvern, but there is no sign of the original course. It was only ever a temporary home with the layout crossing busy Burke Road five times

As suburbia encroached the club bought land at Sandringham, about ten kilometres to the south, built a course and clubhouse and moved out in 1901. Some members persisted at the old course, playing as the Caulfield Golf

Club, but they gave up in 1908 and moved to land they bought at Oakleigh where they renamed themselves the Metropolitan Golf Club. It is said that the final straw was a golf ball landing in a baby's pram being pushed along Burke Road.

Play commenced at Sandringham on July 27, 1901, on a temporary course designed by members of the council (committee) with contributions by leading golfers including the Hon. Michael Scott, winner of the first Australian Open in 1904, and W.J. Carre Riddell, who had a nine-hole course at his home in Elsternwick. The Sandringham course, with various modifications, remained in use until 1930 and hosted the leading events of the time, including the Australian Open, PGA and Amateur Championship.

A turning point for the club and Australian golf came in October 1926 with the arrival of perhaps the greatest designer ever, Alister MacKenzie, to build a new, permanent course across the road at Cheltenham. Known as the West course, it opened to acclaim in 1930 and was followed by Alex Russell's East course in 1932. At the time they were the two





The legacy of

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best designed courses in Australia and were maintained brilliantly by Mick Morcom, who MacKenzie described as the best golf course superintendent he'd ever seen.

The legacy of MacKenzie, Russell, Morcom, et al. is the world-famous Sandbelt, where their work has inspired and been copied, and the high standard of golf course design across Australia which, to a greater or lesser degree, is based on their philosophy.

Since 1891, Royal Melbourne has shown golf lovers and the sporting public the best players available. In the early days it had to produce stars from its own membership. Scott has already been mentioned as Australian

Open champion and Russell won in 1924; Ivo Whitton won five times between 1912 and 1931, a feat eclipsed only by Jack Nicklaus with six wins and Gary Player with seven; and Mona McLeod won four women's amateur championships between 1921 and 1932, along with five Victorian titles.

Over the past century Ben
Hogan and Bobby Jones are
the only top echelon players who have
not graced her fairways, although Jones did
the next best thing by hiring MacKenzie to
design Augusta National in Georgia after he'd
finished in Melbourne.

In total the club has hosted the Australian Open 16 times, along with 19 men's and 14 women's national amateur championships, 13 Australian PGAs, including the 1981 title won by Seve Ballesteros, four World/Canada Cups and two Presidents Cups. There will be no big tournaments this year as the courses are enjoyed fully by members and guests from around the world as they celebrate the 125th.

Events planned are a week of golf with representatives from reciprocal clubs in April, a night of opera under the stars that was held on February 7, period-themed decoration of the clubhouse, updating of Johnson's centenary history by former club captain Richard Allen, and the main day on November 19, when special medals have been struck for the men's and women's competitions.

The reciprocal list makes interesting reading. The royals are: Adelaide, Sydney, Canberra, Perth, Hobart, Auckland, Wellington, Selangor, Hong Kong, Ashdown Forest, Birkdale, Cinque Ports, Lytham & St Annes,

Mid Surrey, Mid Devon, Porthcawl, Wimbledon, West Norfolk,

Aberdeen, Dornoch, Troon,

Dublin, Portrush, Colwood

Country Club, Ottawa,

Montreal and Country
Down.The other

reciprocals are:
Lake Karrinyup,
The Berkshire.

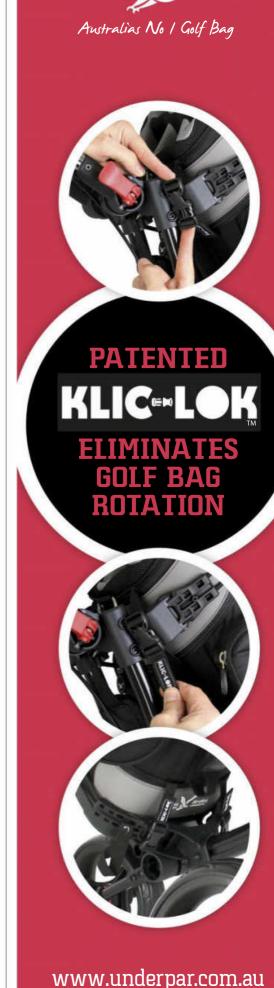
The Ganton and Lahinch.

Not always guaranteed a game but invited anyway are:

Cypress Point, R&A, Royal Malta, Royal Belfast, California,

Chicago, Shinnecock Hills, Pine Valley, Oakmont, Merion, The National, Royal St George's, St Michael's, Royal St David's and the Asia Pacific Amateur Confederation.

Back at the site of the original 1891 course, now Central Park in Malvern, is a plaque stating that John Landy once trained on its measured one-kilometre track before he broke the four-minute mile. The only reference to golf disappeared a few years back when the sign on the public toilet saying that it was prohibited was painted over. Landy richly deserves his plaque. So does this shrine of Australian golf.







A TALE OF TWO TOURS

I GET asked this a lot: what are the differences, if any, between the PGA Tour and the European Tour?

It's a tough one for me to answer. I can only actually compare the PGA Tour with the European Tour I played full-time in the late 1990s and early 2000s. I have to think things have moved on a bit since then, even if I can't imagine that the mentality and the feel of the Tour has changed much at all.

One thing that has changed in Europe is the scheduling. Back in my day – I'm starting to feel old using phrases like that – we started on the continent in March and didn't leave until September. Before and after that the Tour was all over the place. All of which made it an easy circuit to follow for most of the season. Everything was one flight and not much more than a two-hour drive away.

As a result, almost everyone travelled together as a group. So there was a real camaraderie. Only a few events into my rookie season, I felt like I knew most of the people out there. It was very social and, because we were going to countries that were foreign to the vast majority of players, caddies and rules officials, we were all on the 'same team', if you like. It was like a family of tourists, all of us playing a hard game. And anything we could do to help each other, we did it. There really was a great atmosphere.

What helped me, too, was that there were maybe 12 to 15 Aussies in Europe at that time. Guys like Rodger Davis and Peter O'Malley had been there for a while and others like John Senden, Stevie Allan, Greg Chalmers and Adam Scott were relatively new like myself. Looking back, it was a great experience made easier by the fact that the UK is an easy place for Australians to go. Culturally we fit, even if we do argue a bit with the Poms about cricket and ruaby.

That at least is very different in the US. Americans play different sports so there is less opportunity for good-natured banter. There is also a huge contrast in how much money is spent on the infrastructure at PGA Tour events. No expense is spared. We all get cars to drive. We can choose from every brand of ball on the range. The food in the clubhouse is always amazing. And all the 'stuff' we are given each week is embarrassing at times.

Having said that, the number of differences between Europe and the US decreases Thursday to Sunday. There are generally bigger crowds on the PGA Tour but at the end of day we are just playing in golf tournaments, no matter where we are. On Sunday afternoon winning in Europe is just as hard as it is in America.

The European Tour is definitely more 'worldly' than the PGA Tour. It is almost as if everyone in the States is there representing the European Tour, unless you are an American of course. And that vibe is increasing. More and more we are seeing guys from Asia who, like me, have 'graduated' from the European Tour playing – and playing well – on the PGA Tour. Guys like Thongchai Jaidee and Kiradech Aphibarnrat. That is a new development compared with even ten years ago.

All of which leads me to believe that a merger between the European and Asian Tours would make sense. They are getting closer and closer to something like a 'United Nations Tour' anyway. And, to be fair, that might be the only way the rest of the world can compete with the economic juggernaut that is the PGA Tour. I'm no expert in that field, but that's what it looks like to me.

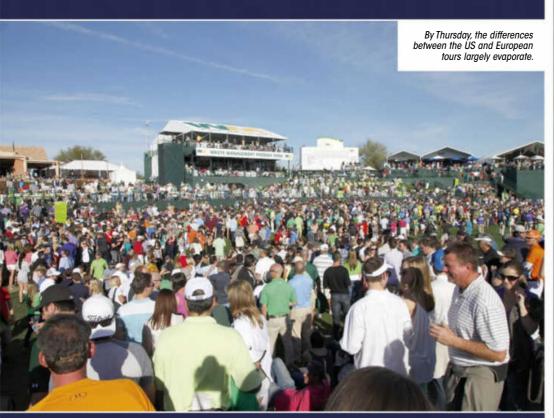
It won't be easy to achieve that, though. The corporate dollar is everywhere in American sport and golf is no different. We play for ridiculous amounts of money because people love to watch us on television, which means they see all the commercials. America is a nation of commerce. So any Tour wishing to compete with all that would need to have massive resources behind it.

The only negative for many players is that the European Tour is so far-flung. The travel can be gruelling. But that isn't insurmountable if a new circuit spent three or four weeks in each area – Australia being a perfect example – before moving on. Think of the benefits that would bring to our Tour: stronger fields and more money for starters.

On the other hand, of course, such a development would only be a positive for the game as a whole. If we had all the best European players competing head-to-head 25 times a year all over the world, that would represent a really good Tour.

I can see a new worldwide Tour developing like the tennis circuit has. Take Wimbledon. In the lead-up to that massive event, there are three or four grass-court events. So all the players are basically in the same place for a month. Then they go to America and play a series of events leading up to the US Open in New York. There's no reason why golf couldn't do something similar. We could have an Australasian swing, a South African swing, an Asian swing and a European swing.





We could have an

Australasian swing,

a South African swing,

an Asian swing and a

European swing. That

would make a lot of

the logistics better.

That would make a lot of the logistics better, especially if – again like tennis – there was more than one event going on in given weeks.

At this point, I have to say that the powersthat-be at PGA Tour headquarters in Ponte Vedra are alive to all of these possibilities. In the past few years we have seen official events spring up in China and Malaysia, for example. They know that Asia has, so far, been a largely un-

Here's another question I've been asked more than once: how close in terms of money would a new 'worldwide except America' Tour have to get financially in order to tempt me to live at home in Australia and play that new circuit?

tapped resource

For me personally, the answer would be "not that close". If I could live in and commute sensibly from Australia for maybe six months of the year, I would do it. Half the money would be enough. But that is just me knowing what I know now. I have to imagine there would be a wide range of answers to that question.

I'll go further than that. Had a new Tour along the lines we have discussed been in existence back in 1999, I might not have ever been a PGA Tour member. But I have to think curiousity would have got the better of me. The PGA Tour is still the premier tour. And it is the best way to get into three of the four major championships. So I would likely have played in the States for four or five years at least. That has nothing to do with which Tour

is 'better' than the other. For me, it would have been all about where I want to live.

That's a big reason why so many of the continental Europeans have found it difficult to settle in the US. They seem to prefer living at home in their own communities. It seems to be easier for the British guys. Or them, the lifestyle is get to what they can get

for the British guys.

For them, the lifestyle is

closer to what they can get
at home.

OK, cards on the table. I would be much more content living in Australia. It's home, which is not to say I don't like living in the US; I do. But like most people I'd rather live at home.

GEOFF OGILVY is the thinking man's Tour professional, whose opinion is well regarded by fellow players and officials. He writes exclusively for *Golf Australia* every month.



www.underpar.com.au



WHY THE VIC OPEN IS FLYING AGAIN

I WELL remember my first Victorian Open. It was as a spectator way back in 1970. The championship was held at Riversdale in an age when spectators followed players down the fairways, woods where made of wood and the world of golf was divided between those who played with the big American ball and the small British ball.

Australia, of course, fell down on the side of the British ball and Kel Nagle and Peter Thomson, both of whom were playing, mastered golf with the smaller ball.

The rising star of the time, David Graham won around the course where he had begun his professional career as a left-handed assistant professional to George Naismith. It was Naismith who determined on Graham's first day of employment the boy would henceforth play as a right-hander. As decisions go, few professional golfers have made a bigger or more significant one.

The Open seemed like a hugely important tournament to me probably because a lot of people seemed to turn up to watch and it held the attention of the back pages of the newspapers all week.

Legendary sports broadcaster Tony Charlton

was hired in 1972 to promote and elevate the status of the event and for five years it did well, relying on the best Australian-based players led by Graham Marsh, Thomson, Nagle, Billy Dunk and Guy Wolstenholme.

Charlton then added one highly paid overseas star to the mix and the arrival of British Open champion Johnny Miller in 1977 coincided with the emergence of our own superstar, Greg Norman.

Arnold Palmer came to Metropolitan the next year and Charlton followed with Gary Player, Ben Crenshaw, Curtis Strange and Lee Trevino. Only the Australian Open and the Royal Melbourne-based Australian PGA Championship were more prestigious events.

The Australian Masters was first played in 1979, the week after Rodger Davis beat Player and Geoff Parslow in the Vic Open play-off at Kingston Heath.

Barry Vivian won the first Masters at Huntingdale with his final-round 80 just beating out Bob Shearer's Sunday 78. It was hardly the stuff of dreams and no one imagined the fledgling tournament ever surpassing the Open's prestige or prizemoney.

Everyone underestimated the passion of

the founders David Inglis and Frank Williams, who left his job to invest and work full-time on the tournament. Their good fortune was Ron Casey, the boss of Channel 7, who was determined the Masters would be on commercial television. Before anyone realised, Inglis and Williams had paired Norman with Severiano Ballesteros and they were on their way.

Unsurprisingly the Vic Open staggered a little as sponsor's money was poured into the Masters. Norman was probably being paid an appearance fee triple that of the prize fund at the Open, which had assumed the role of a lead-up event. It was sad but at least it survived.

There were many great Masters at Huntingdale but few surpassed the opening rounds pairing of Ballesteros and Norman. Then Tiger Woods came to Kingston Heath. The crowds and the anticipation surpassed even the year of Miller at Yarra Yarra and, unlike Miller, Woods came through and won.

The economics of golf tournaments is not easy, as any promoter will tell you. Television is expensive; the players that television executives want are more expensive than ever and in big



PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES X 3; GOLF VICTORIA (LONG).



cities spectators seemingly now only want to turn out in big numbers to observe famous players. Try running an Australian Open in Sydney without Jordan Spieth, Rory McIlroy or Adam Scott, if you doubt it.

Then David Greenhill and Simon Brookhouse at Golf Victoria had the bright idea to take the Victorian Open out of Melbourne and down to Thirteenth Beach at Barwon Heads. They added a full-field women's event and split the opening two rounds over the two courses at Thirteenth Beach. Laura Davies played and was the biggest star on either side of the draw.

The local pros, including Richard Green and Matt Griffin, turned up and despite there being no Adam Scott, Geoff Ogilvy, John Senden, Jason Day or Robert Allenby, the locals didn't seem to care. They came out to watch in numbers the alternating groups of men and women. The organisers let them back on the fairways, allowing them to watch golf properly. As Ogilvy said a few years ago, "golf is supposed to be watched from behind."

It's true, and spectators get to hear caddies talking to players and even ask for themselves what club they used.

Karrie Webb played last month and despite grinding her way to making both the 36-hole and 54-hole cuts, she shot 68 on the final day and almost made the top-ten. It was far from her best but no one really cared so long as they got to see her play.

The Vic Open went back to being a great event. It's fun, the players love it, with most of the women calling it the best event they play all year. The locals seem to appreciate the pros coming and they are happy to watch

kids like Curtis Luck, Todd Sinnott, Ben Eccles, Brett Coletta, Su Oh and Amy Boulden. They aren't famous yet but perhaps they will be one day and it's almost more fun watching them before they are famous than when they are.

Anyone who saw Greg Norman at Yarra Yarra in 1977 would have a hard time disagreeing.

And we wonder about the future of the Australian Masters. Golf tournament promotion still proves to be a game of constant re-invention and adaptation.

MIKE CLAYTON is Australia's most outspoken columnist and an acclaimed course designer with Ogilvy Clayton Cocking Mead Course Design. His column appears monthly in *Golf Australia*.

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THE WGC-DELL MATCH PLAY CHAMPIONSHIP'S VENTURE TO AN INTRIGUING COURSE IN TEXAS, ALONG WITH THE SECOND YEAR OF A FORMAT REVISION, WILL SET UP A RANGE OF TANTALISING HEAD-TO-HEAD CONTESTS.



WORDS: STEVE KEIPERT PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTY IMAGES

Franklin, there are three certainties in life: death, taxes and upsets at the World Golf Championships—Dell Match Play.
Golf's new 'Big Four' of Jordan Spieth, Rory McIlroy, Jason Day and Rickie Fowler will headline the field and fans, sponsors and organisers alike will be hoping the four titans lock horns as the tournament unfolds from March 23 to 27. However, history indicates simply surviving long enough to see the best players

ith utmost respect to Benjamin

still perched on the skinniest branches of the matchplay tree is the toughest obstacle of the week. The revised 'pool' format introduced at last year's event is designed to shield the top players like we protect koalas. It guarantees every player contests a minimum of three matches, avoiding the litany of embarrassing early exits by the top seeds that characterised many of the championship's first 16 editions.

Yet matchplay, especially 18-hole matchplay, is certain to provide upsets. The WGC-Match Play





starts on a Wednesday, so the old knockout format meant half the field had packed their bags at the time of week when tournaments normally begin. Golf fans and matchplay devotees loved the cut-throat nature - was there a better day's golf viewing outside the majors than day one of the Match Play? - but those pulling the strings never liked the constant paring of the field and the high risk of losing multiple drawcards early.

And so now we have 16 pools of four players who play against each of the other three players in their pool in a round-robin affair. The most successful player from each pool moves into a round-of-16 whereby the competition becomes knockout. It is possible for three players in a group to finish their pool matches on a level pegging. It happened in one of the 16 pools last year when Zach Johnson, Branden

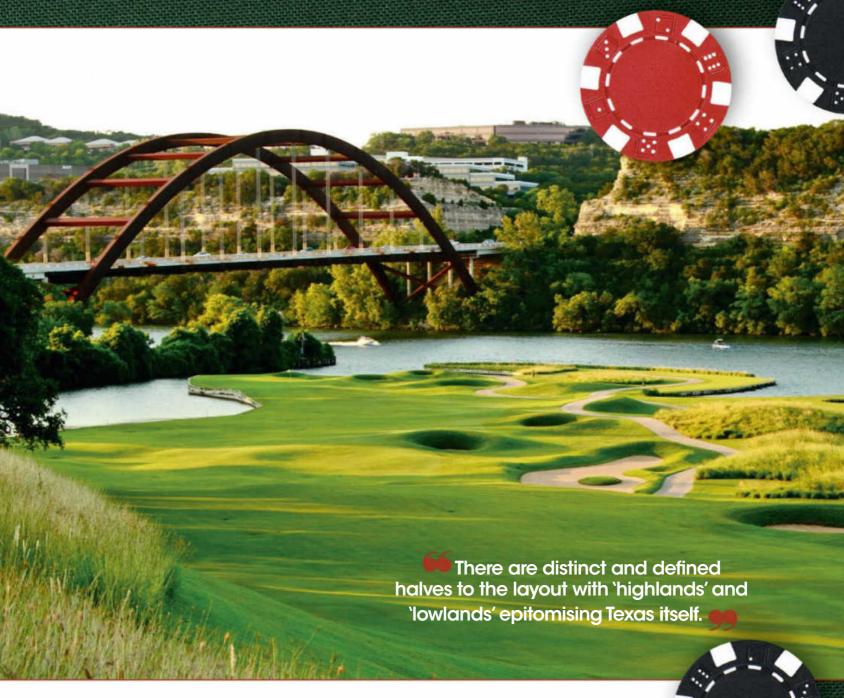
> Grace and Charley Hoffman finished locked with two wins apiece as defending

deadlocked trio contested a play-off that Grace survived after three holes.

Purists prefer the entirely knockout format but television folk and sponsors like the safety of the pool play, and in golf as in life, those who hold the gold make the rules. So we embrace the WGC-Match Play in whichever form it takes and savour the randomness of the match-ups and the intrigue that builds - and frequently it builds where you mightn't expect. For instance, had the knockout format remained in place at last year's championship at TPC Harding Park in San Francisco, we would have been denied the spiciest contest of the week, even the decade, between Keegan Bradley and Miguel Angel Jimenez. Their redundant third-round match (neither man could progress) went the distance and on the 18th hole heated words were exchanged between the fiery

American and the placid but passionate Spaniard that revealed golf's usually quashed turbulent side. Jimenez

won the match but which



player won the war of words depends on individual perspectives, however the tournament received arguably more publicity from that incident than it did for then World No.1 McIlroy taking out the title two days later.

The reigning champ did outline the knife-edge nature of knowing that a day-one loss nowadays means continued existence, but how the pressure to rebound mounts after should a player suffer a first-up defeat.

"You're definitely swimming upstream if you lose that first match," McIlroy said after defeating Jason Dufner on the first day a year ago, before referencing the Volvo Match Play tournament on the European Tour that switched to a round-robin format. "I think I played the Volvo a couple of times, I'm not sure of my record. But you lose that first one, and it is tough because all of a sudden you're not in control of your own destiny. You're looking at the other guys in your pool and seeing what they're doing, and you're not fully focused on yourself. If you win every match, at least you're in control of what you're doing and you don't need to rely on anyone else to win or lose for you to progress."

OSTENTATIOUS AUSTIN

Last year represented a one-off hosting for the former Presidents Cup and future PGA
Championship venue as more change takes place for the 2016 tournament. The WGC-Match
Play moves to Texas and revered Austin Country
Club, where it will remain for at least four years. New title sponsor Dell has its headquarters in the Texas capital and the Pete Dye-designed layout is one of the Lone Star State's finest.

The move resonated well with the current World No.1 player. "I couldn't be more excited and proud that my second home, Austin, Texas, is going to host the WGC-Dell Match Play at the great Austin Country Club," said Spieth, who attended the University of Texas in Austin. "I know that my peers – the Americans and the international players – are going to love the Austin feel, the crowds and Austin Country Club itself."

Much like he's been for the past couple of years, Spieth could be onto something. Austin Country Club has been called a "complex and guileful challenge" and all signs point to a fascinating

UPSET CITY

When the top-64 players in the world are not far apart on the talent-meter, it makes for a succession of boilovers. Here are our picks as the five biggest upsets in the 17-year history of the WGC-Match Play.

1. NICK O'HERN BEATS TIGER WOODS (AGAIN), 2007. The crafty left-hander from Perth became the first player to beat Woods twice in professional matchplay after also toppling him at this tournament in 2005. In their second encounter, Woods was spraying drives all over Arizona and gifted O'Hern a large lead early on in their third-round encounter. Yet he reeled in the West Australian and they went extra holes with Woods missing a short putt at the 19th that would have rescued the match, only for O'Hern to take it at the next hole (below).

2. PETER O'MALLEY BUMPS

TIGER WOODS, 2002. "Pom" was the last man into the field after initially being No.66 on the list. He drew Woods first up but played relentlessly efficient golf – and made a few putts – to eclipse the World No.1, 2&1. It headlined a day of upsets in which the bottom seed ousted the top seed in three of the four brackets, with 62nd-seed Kevin Sutherland eventually taking the title.



- **3. EDUARDO ROMERO NIPS GREG NORMAN, 1999.** The wily Argentinean is known as "El Gato" (the cat) and on this occasion The Cat netted the Great White Shark. Norman qualified for this tournament only twice, beating John Cook in the first round of the event's inaugural year before losing in extra holes to Romero the next day.
- **5. NICK O'HERN OUSTS HAL SUTTON, 2001.** Sutton was the top seed in his bracket within a diluted field at Metropolitan Golf Club in Melbourne and the reigning Players champion, yet he lost on the 21st hole in the first round to O'Hern, who hung on after leading late in the match.
- **5. ROSS McGOWAN OUTLASTS STEVE STRICKER, 2010.** World No.2 Stricker was at the height of his powers and began as the tournament's top seed during Tiger Woods' self-imposed exile, yet Stricker was brought down on the 19th hole by the limit of CGowan lost 24 hours later,

to Japan's Ryo Ishikawa.



matchplay venue. There are distinct and defined halves to the layout with 'highlands' and 'lowlands' epitomising Texas itself. Yet throw in the course's huge slabs of limestone (quarried on-site to revet its tees, fairways and greens) plus an array of cavernous pot bunkers, several steep elevation changes and a run of holes bordering Lake Austin, and you have an eclectic and entertaining design theme. The club even labels itself as "reminiscent of those Scottish classics Royal Dornoch and Gullane Hill".

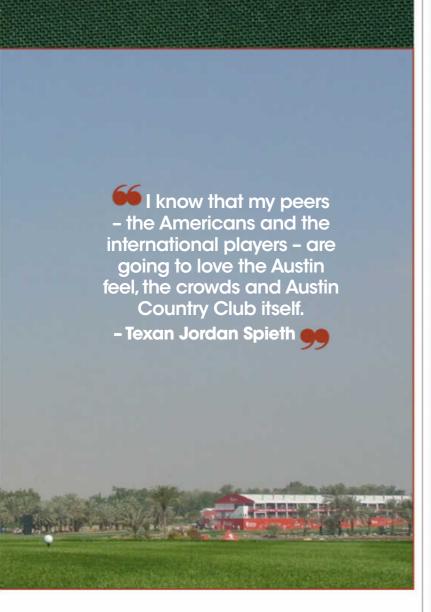
Plenty of that guile will be required to outsmart a matchplay rival. Many of the targets on the shortish layout are constrained so firepower alone won't beat an opponent. There are touches of Dye's opus at TPC Sawgrass within Austin Country Club. There's definitely merit to the thinking that the par-5 3rd hole draws

from the 16th at the Stadium course at Sawgrass, while the next is a 'cape' hole in similar style to others Dye has penned. Evident during 18 holes is the need to shape the

ball in both clirections and to play to specific targets, often

across a forced carry, yet
there's great diversity
throughout. The
orientation of holes for
the WGC-Match Play
will see the lowland
holes against the lake





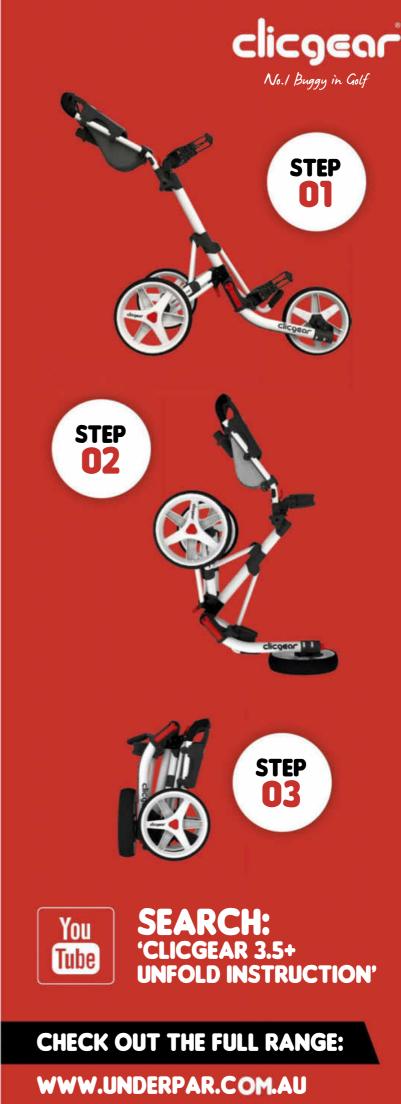
played as the back nine, right where the matches will reach the business end.

Austin, America's 11th largest city based on population, last hosted a regular Tour event from 2003 to 2009 on the Champions Tour, while also being the original site of the Legends of Golf from 1978 to 1994. Austin Country Club, founded in 1899 but on its present site since 1984, has served as the golf home for several of the game's greats, including Hall of Famers Harvey Penick, Ben Crenshaw and Tom Kite.

AUSSIE CHANCES

Collectively, Australia has three victories in the WGC-Match Play. Geoff Ogilvy took our first two, in 2006 and 2009, with Day joining him two years ago. This year, three Australians are guaranteed to be part of the 64-man field, another is likely, while two more are on the outside looking in – but with time remaining to join the fray.

Leishman are part of the field, with Day sure to enjoy a high seeding. Australian Open champion Matt Jones is perhaps one or two mid-field results from locking up his spot, while Texas residents Steven Bowditch and John Senden need to jump about a dozen and 30 ranking places, respectively, to join their compatriots. All the other aspiring Aussies will need to win a big tournament, to break into the world's top-64, before the March 14 cut-off to qualify.



BIG FOUR RECORDS

Among the 'Big Four', Rory McIlroy owns the best career strike rate at the WGC-Match Play.



JORDAN SPIETH

(71 percent)

2014: Quarter-finals (3-1) 2015: Pool stage (2-1) Total: 5 wins, 2 losses



RORY McILROY

2009: Quarter-finals (3-1)

2010: Second round (1-1)

2011: Second round (1-1)

2012: Runner-up (5-1)

2013: First round (0-1)

2014: Second round (1-1)

2015: Winner (7-0)

Total: 18 wins, 6 losses

(75 percent)



JASON DAY

2011: Third round (2-1)

2012: Second round (1-1)

2013: Third (5-1)

2014: Winner (6-0)

2015: Pool stage (0-3)

Total: 14 wins, 6 losses

(70 percent)



RICKIE FOWLER

2011: Third round (2-1)

2012: First round (0-1)

2013: First round (0-1)

2014: Third (5-1)

2015: Round-of-16 (3-1)

Total: 10 wins, 5 losses

(67 percent)

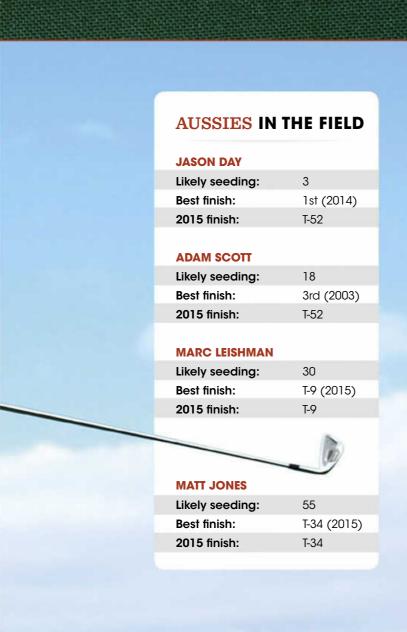


MIX 'N' MATCH

The WGC-Match Play is a rarity among golf tournaments in that under the knockout format it arguably became more boring the longer it went on. We would sit enthralled at the volume and vagaries of the 32 opening-round matches then gradually lose interest as fewer players remained, particularly as the big names departed and especially in the years when the final was contested over a yawn-inducing 36 holes.

Did the new pool format change the situation and keep the best players around for longer? Well, only three of the top-ten players progressed past the pool stage last year. And in deference to McIlroy's comments, just three players (Grace, J.B. Holmes and Tommy Fleetwood) advanced after losing their Wednesday match – and Grace snuck through in a play-off. From there, Fleetwood was the only man to progress past the next round, upsetting Grace in the round-of-16 then losing in the quarter-finals to countryman Danny Willett. So after one edition of the revised system, McIlroy's assertion appears apt: a Wednesday loss might not send you home but it greatly diminishes your chance of success.

The respective matchplay records of the 'Big Four' at this event make for



interesting analysis. Spieth has a 71 percent win rate from seven matches (5-2), McIlroy is at 75 percent from 24 (18-6), Day is at 70 percent from 20 (14-6), while Fowler sits at 67 percent from 15 (10-5). McIlroy's percentage was boosted considerably by winning all seven matches in 2015, while Day's 0-3 run last year weakened his ledger. Only the Northern Irishman and Australian have ever triumphed overall and, coincidentally, both Day and McIlroy defeated Billy Horschel on their way to victory – and on both occasions needed more than the regulation 18 holes to do so.

Just once has any of the esteemed quartet squared off against one another, with Day toppling Fowler 3&2 in the semi-final

of his winning run in 2014. While the 'brackets' system of the old format is gone, the seeding process for pool

matches will continue to hide the game's four best players from each other until the event's closing stages. As the players tee off in Austin, we can salivate at the prospect of a meaningful Spieth vs Fowler or McIlroy vs Day contest during the Easter weekend.

That's our wish; their stumbling block will be sticking around that long.





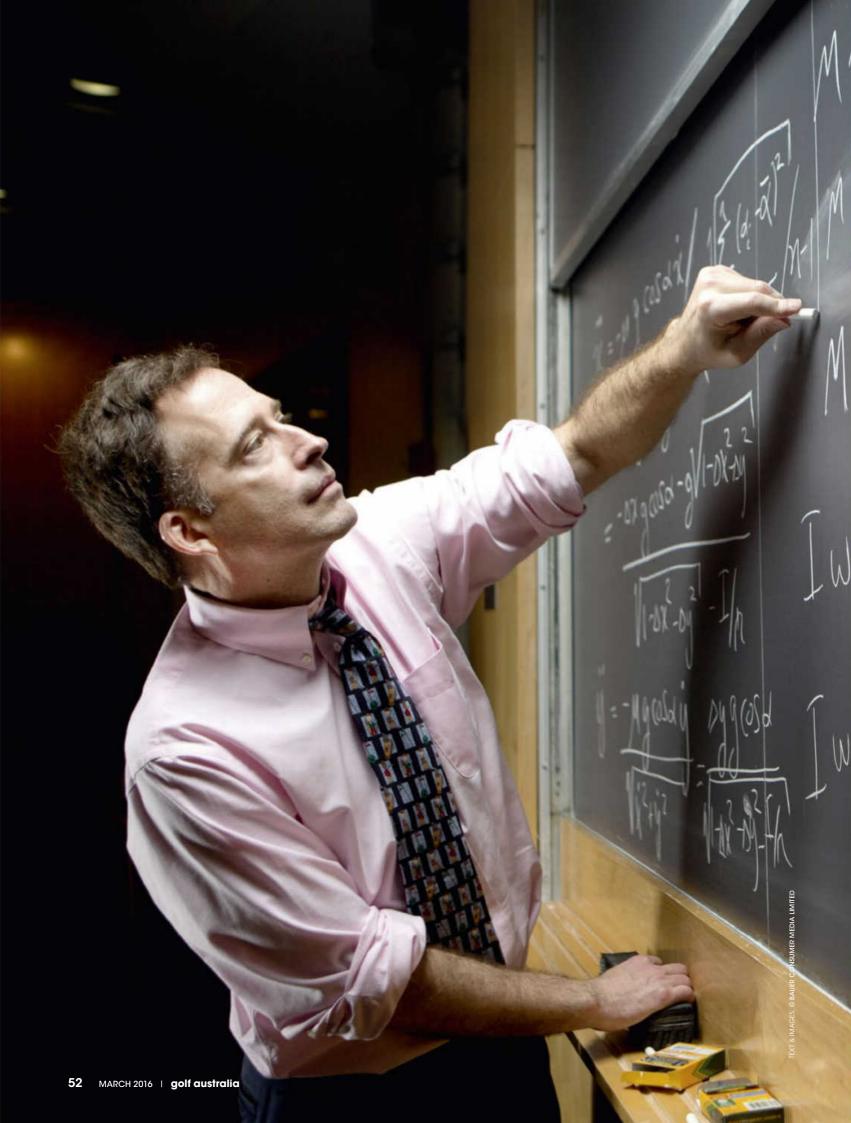
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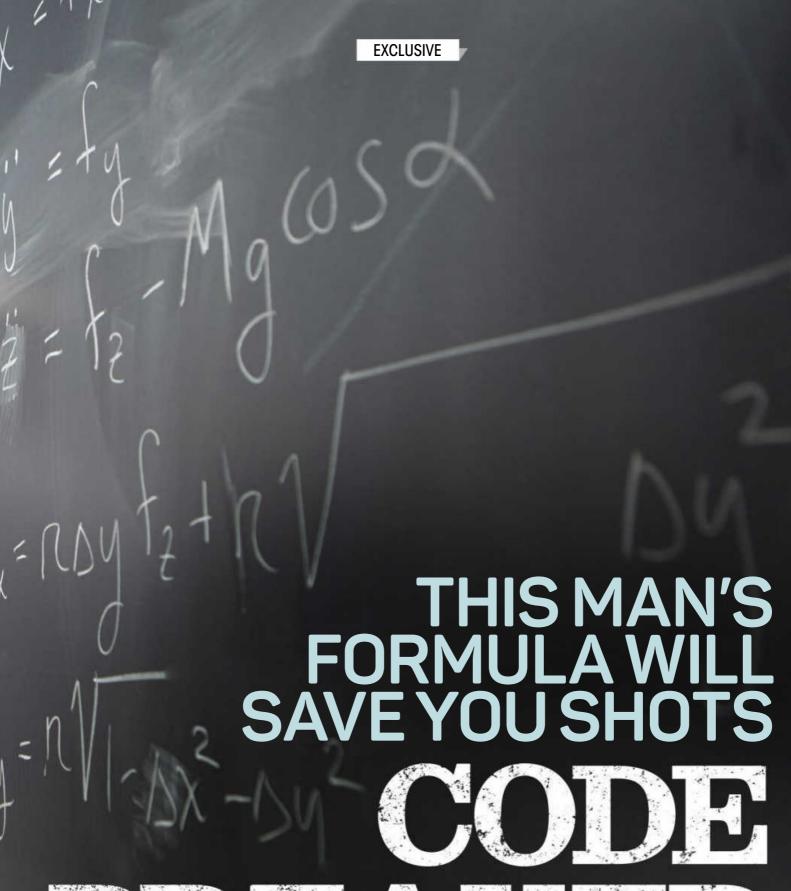
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PROFESSOR MARK BROADIE'S STROKES GAINED STATISTICS HAVE CHANGED THE WAY THE WORLD'S TOP PLAYERS AND THEIR COACHES APPROACH THE GAME. STUART HOOD WENT TO COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY IN NEW YORK TO MEET THE MAN BEHIND GOLF'S MOST INSIGHTFUL ALGORITHM.

rofessor Mark Broadie has been a golfer for most of his life and like most club golfers, there are parts of the game he still cannot fathom. Unlike most club golfers, however, he has a particular set of skills that allow him to analyse our sport and his game in microscopic detail.

"I am an academic professor at Columbia Business School with a lot of experience in using applied mathematics to analyse real-world problems," he explains. "I began working in golf because I love the game, I knew my training could be used to analyse it and I had a few simple questions that I did not know the answer to."

He wanted to find out where the ten strokes between a golfer whose average score is 90 and a golfer averaging 80 come from. And where the ten strokes between a golfer whose average score is 80 and a professional who averages 70 come from. And if he could hit the ball 20 yards further with his driver and change nothing else about his game, how many strokes would his score go down.

"I did not know how I was going to answer these questions, but I knew that I could figure them out if I had data that told me where every shot started and finished," he recalls. "The next problem, of course, was getting this shot level data."

Back in the late 1990s, there were no laser rangefinders or GPS watches, so Broadie



'THE DATA LETS ME CHART THE PERFORMANCE TRAITS OF ALL

developed a rudimentary system involving 18 sheets of paper, onto which golfers at his club would chart where each of their shots went. This information went onto a spreadsheet, which led Broadie to embark on what he describes as "an enormous programming task". Then, in 2001, after 18 months of crunching codes and formulating formulas, he released version one of Golfmetrics.

"The software had a map of every hole I was using to gather data and an entry method that involved clicking the mouse on the spot where your shot landed, which made it easier" he recalls.

With the amateur data flowing in,
Broadie's next mission was obtaining some
professional data. The PGA Tour had just
launched its ShotLink Intelligence datagathering system, which proved to be the
final piece in Broadie's data jigsaw.
Golfmetrics now contained a mass of
amateur and professional stroke data that
the mathematician was able to compare any
way he pleased. He swiftly discovered how

much further Tour golfers hit it than golfers who average 80, and how many more fairways players who average 80 hit than those averaging 90. But while this information was interesting, it didn't answer his original questions.

"It didn't tell me where the difference in scores between an 80 and a 90 golfer came from, and neither did comparing things like proximity to the hole," he explains. "So I came up with the idea of measuring the quality of an individual shot against a benchmark figure for a golfer of your level, or indeed another level. At the time I called this 'Shot Value', but it is now known as 'Strokes Gained'."

And a real breakthrough had been made.
The mathematician published his initial findings in 2008 and within three years the PGA Tour had introduced strokes gained as a method of measuring putting performance. Today, the PGA Tour is also using the strokes gained tee-to-green statistic and Broadie is working with brands such as TaylorMade, players like Luke

Donald and coaches like Sean Foley.

So how are strokes gained calculated? In simple language, the formula measures a golfer's progress towards the hole in terms of strokes rather than distance. He can do this for a golfer of any handicap, but the easiest way of explaining the system is by using the example of a scratch golfer. If you're a scratch golfer on the tee of a par-4 with a stroke average of exactly 4.0 for golfers of your category, you will be four strokes away from the hole from the tee.

As soon as you click on the position where your tee shot landed, Golfmetrics uses its pre-recorded data to evaluate how many strokes it would take the average scratch golfer to get the ball in the hole from that position. If the average number of strokes the computer expects a player of your ability to take from your new position is below three, then you have gained strokes on the benchmark and your drive will be awarded a positive stroke gained figure. If it is above three, then you have lost strokes on the benchmark and will be awarded a negative

strokes gained figure. This process is then repeated for all of the subsequent shots it takes you to get the ball in the hole, giving you an accurate insight into the real reason you made birdie, par or bogey.

"This idea gives golfers an accurate measure of the quality of each of their shots by comparing drives, approach shots, chips and putts in a way that is mathematically justified," explains the professor. It also lets him chart the performance traits of golfers of different abilities.

"Having all this data allows me to simulate shots," he smiles. "I can see what happens to a group of 20-handicappers if I give them a professional's drive but leave everything else the same, or find out how much their scores would drop if they kept all their shots until the green and then had a PGA Tour player's short game. It's fun. But it's snowballed beyond anything I could have imagined. And the more I analyse the data, the more questions it throws up."

To throw a few more questions his way, we travelled to the professor's New York office to find out more ...

So where do the ten strokes between a golfer who averages 90 and a golfer who averages 80 come from?

The data has shown that shots outside of 100 yards contribute about two-thirds of the difference in score between almost

PROS V AMATEURS

This table compares the average Tour pro and average 90-shooter. Average leave is the distance the approach shot finishes from the hole as a percentage of the shot distance, so a 100-yard shot that ends five yards from the pin is five percent leave. If a golfer hits five approaches with leaves of two, three, six, seven and 25 percent, the middle value (six percent) is the average leave.

18 I	HCP	TOURPRO				
5	5.2 Pa	r-3 holes r-4 holes r-5 holes	3.1 4.1 4.7			
		g distance (yards) curacy (degrees)	295 3.4			
14	4% Average lead 6% Greens hit	ve, 100-150 yards ve, 150-200 yards t, 100-150 yards t, 150-200 yards	5.5% 5.9% 80% 67%			
17 13 39 90 80 64	7% Average lea 3% Average lea 9% Average leav 3% Greens l 0% Greens h	eave, 0-20 yards ave, 20-60 yards ave, 60-100 yards ave, 60-100 yards are sand, 0-50 yards arit, 0-20 yards t, 60-100 yards sand, 0-50 yards	14% 11% 6% 16% 97% 91% 86% 92%			

GOLFERS AND LETS ME SIMULATE THEIR SHOTS. IT IS A LOT OF FUN.'

any two groups. So the average 80 golfer will be 6.5 strokes better than the average 90 golfer at hitting shots from outside of 100 yards and 3.5 strokes better on shots inside 100 yards.

This led you to conclude that the long game is more important than the short game. Are you surprised at how many people have challenged this view?

Not really, because people had believed the short game was more important for such a long time. Some people are still tough to convince, while others seem to think that I am suggesting that the short game is not important. I'm not saying that at all. The short game and putting matter. But, having quantified it, they just don't matter as much as the long game.

You've been critical of traditional statistics. Why is this?

Because they are somewhere between misleading and uninformative and I think Dustin Johnson's putting is a great example

HOW TO SAVE TEN SHOTS

To lower your score by ten shots requires, on average, a 2.8-stroke improvement in driving, 3.9 strokes in approach play, 1.9 strokes in short-game shots and a 1.3-stroke improvement in putting.

Score	To	Driving	Approach	Short	Putt
90	80	2.5	4.0	2.1	1.4
100	90	2.6	4.0	2.0	1.4
110	100	3.4	3.7	1.7	1.2
Averaç		2.8	3.9	1.9	1.3
Fraction o		28%	39%	19%	14%

SCORE FROM TEE

This data shows how the average scores of professional golfers and 90-shooters differ as the distance of the hole increases. Unsurprisingly, the further from the hole, the greater the difference.



SPIETH'S STATISTICAL PHENOMENA

"Jordan Spieth's coach, Cameron
McCormick, recently came to me because he
wanted to counter an argument we've heard a
lot of in recent seasons. That argument says:
'Jordan Spieth is not that great at any part of
the game. He wins because he has heart and

holes the putts when it counts.'

"People say that because if you look at Jordan's traditional statistics for the 2015 season you will find that he was ranked relatively high in all the key areas, yet he won two majors, the FedEx Cup and is currently Professor Broadie on why Jordan Spieth's traditional scoring stats don't paint an accurate picture of his game.

No.1 in the world.

"The problem is that there is a complete disconnect between his performance statistics and his performance. But traditional categories are very poor and very inaccurate measures of performance."



DRIVINGDISTANCE/ACCURACY

Traditional stats say: Spieth ranked 78th on the PGA Tour last season for driving distance (291.8 yards) and 80th for accuracy (62.9 percent).

Golfmetrics' data says: It only matters how many strokes it takes to reach the hole from the position your tee shot ends up in, so distance/accuracy combine as Strokes Gained Driving. Here, Spieth ranked 14th.



GREENS IN REGULATION

Traditional stats say: Spieth ranked 49th on Tour in greens in regulation in his incredible season (67.87 percent).

Golfmetrics' data says: Over the course of the season, Spieth gained 0.6 shots on the field with his approach shots in each round to

rank a more impressive 14th in strokes gained with approach shots.

'TIGER WOODS SHOT A SCORE LOWER THAN THE FIELD AVERAGE 89



SCRAMBLING

Traditional stats say: Spieth ranked fourth in scrambling (65.03 percent) and 24th in sand save percentage (58.14 percent).

Golfmetrics' data says: Strokes gained with the short game better analyses a player's wedge performance and bunker play. Here, Spieth ranked third, his short game gaining 0.61 shots on the field per round.



PUTTING

Traditional stats say: Spieth led the PGA Tour in putts per round (27.82) and putting average (1.699 per hole).

Golfmetrics' data says: Take into account where the players putted from and Spieth was actually only the ninth best putter on Tour with 0.65 strokes gained putting per round (Jimmy Walker led the stat).

of this. He's currently fourth in putts per green in regulation and 17th in putts per round, which suggests he is an elite putter. Yet strokes gained putting ranks him 72nd, which suggests he is an average putter. These are two very different stories, so which one should you believe? It has to be strokes gained, because traditional putting stats don't take distance into account. Dustin takes fewer putts than other PGA Tour professionals not because he is a great putter, but because he is a great iron player, so his first putt is usually significantly closer to the hole than the PGA Tour average.

According to strokes gained, what was the best season in history?

The best total strokes gained figure I have so far come across belonged to Tiger Woods. He gained 3.7 strokes per round against the field during 2009. Tiger's strokes gained with approach shots statistics were incredible from 2000 to 2012 – he was never outside of the top-five. But the one I find most interesting is the number of consecutive rounds where he managed to beat the

shots statistic looked great. He was gaining 1.4 strokes a round on the field for the entire season and everything

> seemed to be in very good order. But when I broke his approach shots down into 200-250 yards, 150-200 yards and 100-150 yards, I found that he was 150th on the PGA Tour from 100-150 yards. He was actually losing 0.1 strokes a round on the field in this area, so I felt that if he could change this from a weakness to a strength he could improve a quarter of a stroke per round, which is a lot. As it happened, he worked on it and the next year he gained 0.3 strokes a round on the field with between 100-150 yards. That equated to 1.6 shots

> > So the stats can uncover the flaws in anyone's game?

pitching wedge.

a tournament, just by

working on his 9-iron and

Yes, but they can also highlight the positives. On the way home from an event, Sean Foley asked Justin Rose

TIMES IN A ROW. THAT IS JUST ASTOUNDING.'

field average. Across two seasons in the peak of his career, Tiger managed to shoot a score that was lower than the field average 89 times in a row. To put this into some sort of perspective, Jordan Spieth and Rory McIlroy have never got past 15 and the next best streak during the period I investigated was Mark O'Meara's 33. This is one of the most amazing statistics I've ever seen. It highlights how consistently brilliant Tiger was in his prime.

You currently work with a number of top players and coaches. Doing what, exactly?

It depends, but it often involves an extremely specific area you cannot see in the traditional stats. Often players feel like they are better or worse than the field in a certain area, but have no idea how much this specific shot is gaining or costing them in terms of strokes per round. Take Jason Day. In 2011, his strokes gained with approach

to rate how good a wedge player he was. Rose said he was pretty good, but not as good as some players. So Sean showed him a report that I had compiled, which ranked Justin as the No.1 on the PGA Tour in strokes gained from short game shots. Justin did not realise how good he was until he saw the stats. Knowing he was the best in the world gave him incredible confidence when he pulled out the wedge.

What questions have recently popped into your head?

I've had a few. I want to discover which players perform the best under pressure of being close to the lead on the final day and how the games of some of the world's top golfers compare when they play on the same course at this summer's Olympics. And I believe there is a lot of scope for investigating areas like risk versus reward and driver versus 3-wood. So you see, the questions just keep coming.

HOW TO MAKE STROKES GAINED WORK FOR YOU

Mark Broadie reveals the three key elements you need to work on to improve your scores fast.

1. MAKE SMALL GAINS

"The most obvious lesson we can all take from the research is that the long game is more important than the short game. I appreciate that it is never going to be easy for a weekend golfer to go out and put 20 yards on their drives. Because of this, I would suggest setting yourself the short-term goal of becoming a stroke better at putting and a stroke better at the short game and the long-term goal of gaining strokes with your long game by working on your fitness, strength, speed and balance."

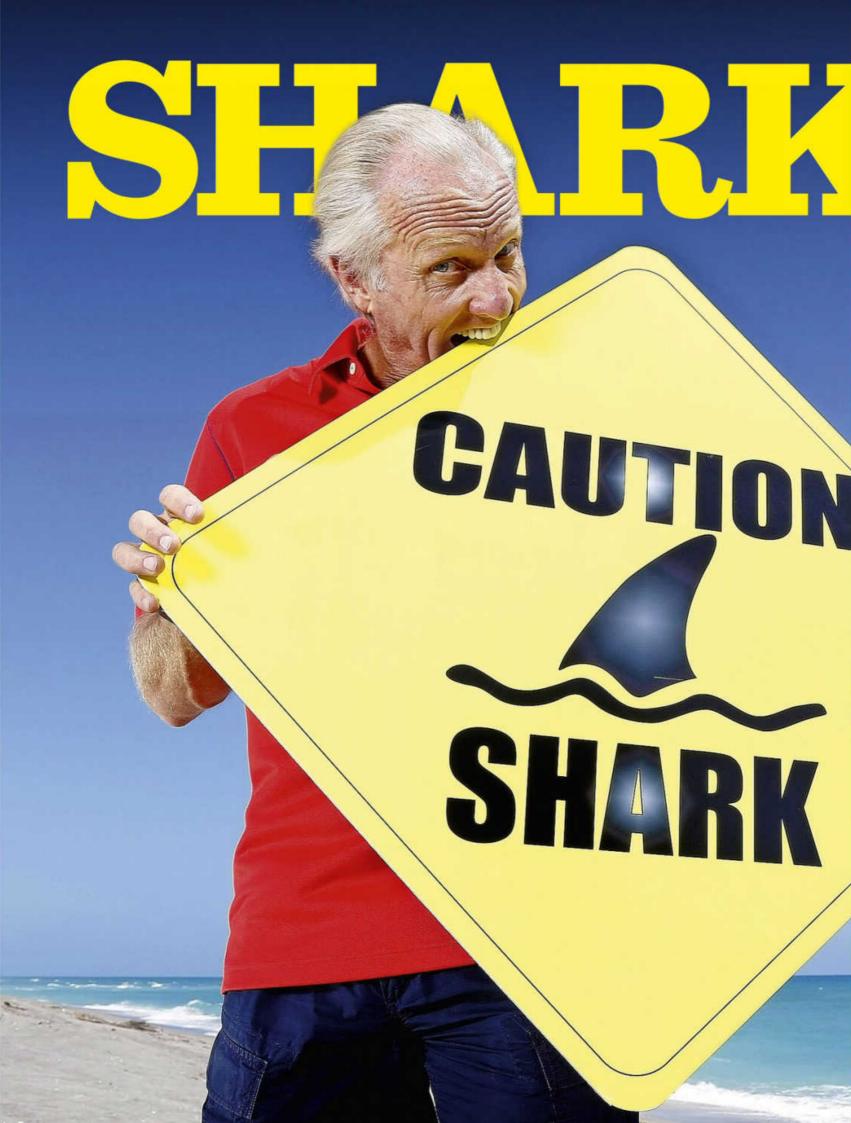
2. NAIL YOUR APPROACHES

"Another area that can reap fairly swift gains is on mid-to-short iron approach shots. According to Golfmetrics' benchmark data, golfers whose average score is 90 get 50 per cent of their shots from 100-150 yards inside 12 yards of the hole, and golfers whose average score is 80 get 50 per cent of their shots from 100-150 yards inside nine yards of the hole. So if you can knock more of your 7 or 8-irons nine to ten feet closer you could very easily take a couple of shots off your game."

3. STRATEGISE WISELY

"Scoring well requires good decision making. Tee shots that land in the rough cost about one-tenth to one-quarter of a stroke; shots into a recovery situation cost around half a stroke; shots into water or a lateral hazard cost a full stroke; and shots that land out-of-bounds cost a full two strokes.

Amateur golfers turn out to be poor strategists, often hitting more aggressively or more conservatively than they should. Improving strategy, then, may be amateurs' best road to a lower score."



IBHILIS

HE MAY HAVE HUNG UP HIS CLUBS, BUT GREG NORMAN IS STILL A GIANT IN THE GAME. WE SPENT A DAY WITH HIM IN THE BAHAMAS, TALKING ABOUT THE TOUR, TECHNOLOGY, THE OLYMPICS, GROWING GOLF... AND HE DIDN'T HOLD BACK.

WORDS: ROB McGARR PHOTOGRAPHY: ANGUS MURRAY, GETTY IMAGES

reat white sharks are hugely misunderstood. Ever since
Steven Spielberg's '70s classic, they have been perceived as merciless, bloodthirsty killers. And while it's true you wouldn't want to get on the wrong side of one, you are statistically more likely to die as a result of falling out of bed than from a shark attack. Sharks play a pivotal role in maintaining the oceanic food chain. Without them, the whole ecosystem would collapse.

The world's second most famous great white, Greg

Norman, gets an equally unfair rap. Search any meanspirited list of golf's 'top-ten chokers' and you will
find Norman at the top. He is widely regarded as
the greatest golfer to win only two majors,
having passed up chances to win four or
five times as many. It's undeniable that

Norman should have finished off some of those opportunities – he surrendered Sunday leads, shared or outright, in 12 other majors – but events conspired against him.

He was the victim of miracle shots and record-breaking scores from opponents, suffered gravity-defying lipouts at crucial moments, and even lost the first ever four-hole Open play-off. Norman birdied the first play-off hole at Royal Troon in 1989, which would have secured the Claret Jug in any previous year, but just happened to coincide with the first time the R&A changed the format. "Sometimes, other players did things to win," says Norman, now 61 and retired from competitive golf. "Other

times, I screwed up. But that's golf. These things happen."

All too often forgotten is Norman's 'go-for-broke' mentality, which made him a spectator's dream but a caddie's nightmare. Greg was never shy to roll the dice with everything on the line. He was a breath of fresh, Australian air in a sport where we're taught to 'play the percentages'.

Shortly after winning his first tournament as a pro, Norman found himself leading another with just a few holes to go. He dumped four balls in a row into the water, trying to carry a lake to a green 200 metres away. His caddie told him the next ball was their last, and firmly suggested he lay up.

"I said, 'I can carry this son of a bitch,'" says Norman. And he did. Norman maintained that outlook through his entire career, and it still drives him today, with a business empire posting revenues of more than \$400 million a year.

As you'd expect, Norman didn't win the tournament in which he had his 'Tin Cup moment', but he won 91 others, including two Open Championships. He spent 331 weeks as the world's No.1 golfer, a mark eclipsed only by Tiger Woods. No one else has managed 100.

The Shark may have underachieved, but he did it his way: going for everything and to hell with the consequences. Today, Great White Shark Enterprises means Norman has little time for playing golf, but it is never far from his thoughts. He holds strong views on long putters, modern equipment enabling the ball to fly too far, the potential disaster facing golf in Rio later this year, and how golf's failure to attract youngsters is bringing about its own demise. Norman is determined to play as big a role in keeping golf healthy as sharks do in keeping the ocean thriving. Dare to stand in his way and be prepared to get bitten ...



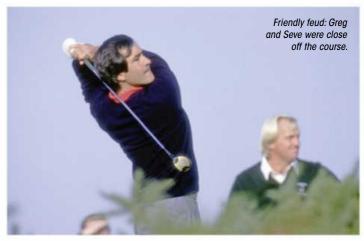
There should

be one set of rules

for the pros and

another one for

amateurs.



You were the best driver of the ball in your era – possibly of all-time. How do you feel about the distances players hit it now?

I definitely would have been hitting it 340 yards with the technology they have now.

When we grew up, our sweet spot was the size of our little fingernail. We knew when we were standing over the ball that we had to control our core muscles right down to the 'nth' degree. If we were just a tiny bit off, our dispersion pattern was a lot bigger than it would be today.

You always had a keen interest in your equipment ...

For me to play professional golf I had to pass the club pros' exam, and a big part of that was making golf clubs. I made all my own clubs. I did my own whipping, did my own shafting, ground my own hosel and heel. I used to love it. I still have my old grinder at home. You have to keep those things, don't you?

I did something a bit different with my irons: I put my 8-iron shaft in my 7-iron, my 9-iron shaft in my 8-iron, my wedge shaft in my 9-iron, and so on. I wasn't after distance with those clubs; I just wanted to make sure I was always hole-high. I used to hit my 7-iron 155 yards; nowadays guys hit a 7-iron 190 to 195. But the lofts now are totally different.

What's your view on the anchoring ban that came in on January 1?

I think it's great news, I really do. I hated anchoring when it first came out and I saw players using it. The golf swing should not be an anchored move – it's a swing.

Any other rule changes you'd like to see?

For the pros, I'd go back to the specification

of the golf ball pre-1996, and I'd change the co-efficient of restitution (COR) of the ball coming off the clubface. There should be different rules and regulations for the pros and the amateurs, no question. The amateur

doesn't extract what we can extract out of technology. They do it in college baseball – people can use an aluminium bat, but in the Majors you can't. I think

technology should be wide open for the masses.

Why do you
want to see
the equipment
regulations limited
on Tour?

We change golf courses
for one week a year. It's a huge
cost that goes to that. Every golf
championship is one week a year, and
they have to adjust the golf course

because 30 players are coming in who can hit it 300 yards and do different things. That's crazy.

You give guys a gutta
percha ball and a hickoryshafted golf club, and they
will still go and play in the
Masters every year, and the best
player will still come out and win.
They can play a 5,800-yard golf course.
The best player will still win.

I get that everybody loves seeing a ball being hit 340 or 350 yards, but at the end of the day, that's not the reality of how golf is really played. Most people hit it 200, 220, maybe 250 if they're really good – it's a big difference.

Can better equipment help attract people to the game, and keep them playing longer?

I think the whole industry has changed, and now we're

forcing product down people's throats every six months instead of every year or two years. In our day, you always had the launch at the annual PGA Show. All the new product would be shown there for the year. Now there's something new coming out all the time. You really can't keep hammering the consumer, because golf is an expensive sport.

Equipment aside, do you think the standard of player is higher now or back in your day?

There are a lot of good players out there now. It actually reminds me of the 1980s and '90s. We had probably ten or 12 of us, with Ballesteros, myself, Faldo, Price, Langer, Woosnam, Lyle and Couples – wherever we went in the world, we were competing against each other. I think that's where the game is now. At the elite level, it's the most exciting time in golf for a long time.

You and Seve were closer than a lot of people realise ...

Seve and I had a great relationship. We were battling to get to the top of the world. As we both got higher and higher in the world, we inevitably adopted a more competitive attitude to it. It wasn't until the latter part of his career and life when we got back to being nates. He was an unbelievable talent.

Given your driving prowess, did you ever try to help him fix his wayward tee shots?

He was the worst driver of a golf ball I have ever seen in my life. His driving was far worse than Tiger's. It was going either side – straight right or straight left. You didn't know what was coming next.

Unbeknown to a lot of people, his right arm was about two inches longer than his left. That always made him come over the top. His right arm was so long and so dominant on the downswing that the more pressure he was under, the more he would get under or over the swing plane. It was truly ugly to watch. He and Ian Baker-Finch had the ugliest backswings I've ever seen in my life.

But you'd get off the golf course and you'd think he'd shot 80, because he was everywhere, and he'd actually shot 68, 69 or 70. He'd be all over the course - in places no one else would go - and he'd beat you. He averaged two chip-ins a day. It was amazing.

It was frustrating to play against, especially when he beat you, but it taught you to play your own game. It's no use watching other players play. He would come to Florida and we'd go to the driving range together and I would work on his driving, and he'd give me tips on my short game.

What did he teach you?

He was a master at taking a pitching wedge and making it any loft he wanted. He was always varying the loft of the golf club to do whatever he wanted. People always say Seve had great hands, and he did, but he actually used very little wrist break. He just rotated the body and then let the club go with it. When you're under pressure, you want the small muscles to take a ride with the big

He never really took a big divot. He would just sweep the ball off the grass. One of the

things he and I talked about is that when you're playing extremely well, you bruise the grass, but never take a divot. You just brush the top of it. You could stay there all day long hitting off the same spot. That's the correct way to practise. He simplified the short game and he was a master at it.

Did what he taught you ever come in particularly handy?

He taught me a shot one day during a practice round before the Seve was the Match Play worst driver of the Championship. golf ball I've ever He and I went out together very seen in my life. early. We're on the 7th hole and he hits this terrible shot and buries it in the left-hand bunker. The bunker is about five feet deep and I walk over there and he's got a buried lie, and then he whacks down on top of the ball with the back of his club, smashing it into the sand a little bit more, so it's almost completely buried. I said "Seve, what are you doing?" and he said, "Let me show you a shot I just taught myself." He took his sand wedge and hit above the equator of the ball with the leading edge, and drove the ball into the sand. It squeezed up the clubface and onto the green.

The next year, I'm playing Augusta, and

I buried it in the bunker at the back of 12. There's not much green to work with and Rae's Creek is right there. I'm playing with Hale Irwin. I think it was the Friday afternoon. I get in there and I said to myself, "There's no better time to test this out than right now," so I go in there with my sand wedge. I'd

> practised it hundreds or thousands of times.

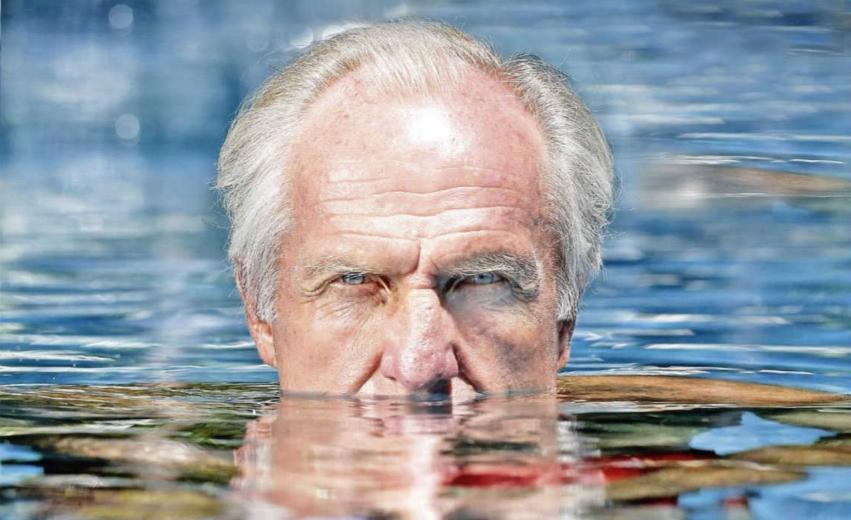
> > I got in there and I committed to the shot and I swear to God it came out beautifully, landed just on the edge of the green, skidded across

and stopped about a foot short of the hole. Hale Irwin looked at me and goes and bear in mind back then there was nothing back there, no spectators or anything - he said, "What the f*** was that?" He came over and looked at my golf club, thinking there was something illegal with my club. I just walked off, made my three and kept on

That was the only time I ever played that shot in competition, but that was Seve teaching me something special - it was pretty cool. The kids nowadays would never hit that - they would never even contemplate hitting that shot.

going, and I left him completely

flabbergasted.







How pleased were you to see fellow Aussie Jason Day top the world rankings?

I'm very impressed with Jason. I'm very happy for him. He came out and said he wanted to be world No.1. That's a big statement to make. You've got to have a lot of belief in yourself and some big balls if you're going to make that statement publicly. He committed himself to it, put a lot of hard work into

It's so different
nowadays; these kids
hardly say anything about
anything. You don't know
what's going on in their head. For
Jason to come out and say "I want to
be No.1 in the world" was a breath of
fresh air.

it and he got it. I

love to see that.

You led the 2008 Open at 53 – do you think an over-50 can win a major?

It's only a matter of time before a 50-year-old wins The Open. Technology is on their side now. An over 50-year-old could never win at Augusta; it's too long and the greens get way too fast. At The Open the greens roll at about 11.5 on the stimpmeter, but at Augusta they're around 14. Guys over 50 have a hard time with that. But at The Open, I can definitely see it happening. You get a hard and fast golf course where guys who can visualise shots are at an advantage.

If there was one round you could play again, what would it be?

Birkdale, 2008. I still thought I could do it. You know what killed me then? I had to sit down and wait for 50 minutes for that tee shot on 10. You had nowhere to go. I think that killed my concentration more than anything else. Even though you should get used to waiting and knowing what to do, I

hadn't played a lot of golf leading
up to that event. I was in a
rhythm, playing in a certain

way in the crappy
weather, and that
delay killed it.

If you could
have one
mulligan from
your whole career,
when would you use it?

Probably the 4-iron on 18
at Augusta in '86. It was just the
wrong club. I had 187 yards and
I tried to take a bit off a 4-iron, but
under pressure you're better off going

as close to a full swing as you possibly can. I was taking 4-iron and I had to take a lot off it, because I was trying to hit a high cut shot to get back to the flag. The 18th hole has a lot of upslope, and trying to cut it in there, that's why I flared it out to the right. I'd have hit a solid 5-iron and just hit my standard shot. But anyway, if my aunty had balls, she'd be my uncle.

Why don't you play on the Champions Tour?

what he did. I love

to see that.

I've had two parts of my life. I had a great part playing golf, but I'm having more fun now, doing what I'm doing now. It's just totally different. To win a major championship, you have to focus for a week.

GREG'S MAJOR MISSES

1984 US Open Lost an 18-hole play-off to Fuzzy Zoeller, who recorded the lowest score in a US Open play-off.

1986 Masters Made four straight birdies, but bogeyed the last when a par would have secured a play-off spot.

1986 US Open Held the 54-hole lead, but final-round 75 cost him dearly.

1986 US PGA A final-round 76, coupled with Bob Tway's miraculous bunker holeout on the 72nd hole, saw the Shark suffer a third major near-miss in one year.

1987 Masters Larry Mize holed a 140-foot chip on the second play-off hole to end Greg's dream.

1989 Open Birdied the first play-off hole, which in previous years would have secured the title. In a four-hole play-off, Norman blew up on the last, thinning his third shot out-of-bounds.

1993 US PGA A three-putt bogey on the second play-off hole cost him the title.

1995 US Open A 71st-hole bogey saw Norman miss out by two shots.

1996 Masters Taking a six-shot lead into the final day, shot a 78

to lose by five to Nick Faldo, who shot 67.

2008 Open Led at age 53, but a closing 77 left him four shots off the top.

Obviously you prepare, but really, it's a week's work. When you're building a business, you're building it for a couple of hundred years. In business, you have the mortality test: can you create something that lives on past your death? In sport, you have a finite amount of time, and then you're gone. If you win a bunch of trophies, your name is on those trophies, but fast forward 200 years and your name is just a name on a trophy. People don't really relate to it. If you structure your business in the right way, it can live on far longer.

How do you feel about golf's Olympic return for Rio de Janeiro later this year and Tokyo in 2020?

My hopes are that it's successful in the eyes of the IOC and they vote it back in for 2024. What I'm afraid of is that they've chosen the wrong country to bring golf back into

I wish it was going to be in Australia, London or the US. There's just so much underlying uncertainty about the course and the structure on the periphery of the golf course – the ownership and the infrastructure and all that stuff. There are so many unknowns going into this, and I think it's because of the location and the country it's in. I think in Rio it could be a nightmare, and that worries me, big-time.

The cost of doing golf is way more than any other sport in the Olympics, because you need to televise 18 holes. NBC are going to have more cameras there than at any other event. You've got to have the broadcasting team there for two weeks and the production team there for two weeks, so the cost for the IOC putting golf into the

Olympics is going to be very, very expensive.

They're going to sit back and take a look at all this and see what the viewing audience is and which players they get, because you read a lot of media where players are saying, 'It's not important to me.' I hope none of the big names skip it. I truly hope not. I would love to see them treat it like Roger Federer or Serena Williams treat Olympic tennis. It's a really important moment for golf, having golf in the Olympics. If we fail, golf won't be back in the Olympics for another 100 years.

How can golf safeguard its future?

We have to reach down to the millennials. There are ways to reach down to the millennials, but to do it, institutions and golf clubs have to get out of the box they've been in for the past 50 years. Not every golf club and not every institution is going to agree to do it, because they're so set in their ways, but we have to get to the young.

The only way you get to the young is through social media and their devices. Everybody has got a device in their hand, whatever their age. We have to find a way to reach down to them. If they want to play with their headsets on, in a T-shirt, in a group of six or seven with their mates, playing loud music, let them. Why not? It's got to change. There are ways, but you have to get out of

Do you think things like foot golf are part of the problem or the cure?

I don't think there's anything wrong with

things like foot golf or disc golf, but I don't think you need to change the game of golf. You may be able to change it from 18 holes to 12 holes. Maybe there are ways to speed the game up. I think it's more the interaction of the kids and the ways of connecting a kid in Miami Beach to a kid in LA. They're both playing golf at the same time and they're both on their devices. There's a guy who plays a video game every day – I think his name is PewDiePie – he has 24.4 million followers a day, watching him play a video game on YouTube. He makes \$12 million a year. These kids are connected to their device, watching this kid play a game.

Give these kids a device where they can actually play golf and have fun with it and watch a video and play their mate somewhere else. It's not rocket science. There is a way. Stay tuned. I'm going to push pretty hard at this for the next 12 to 15 months.

What's your best advice for amateurs?

Stay within your limitations. I think amateur golfers try to get 100 per cent out of every shot. Quite honestly, the best players in the world don't get 100 per cent out of every shot. We probably play to within 75-80 per cent of our capabilities. And we're always playing for our misses. If I'm going to miss this shot, I'd rather be 30 feet under the hole over here

than ten feet above the hole over here. If it's 168 yards and you hit your best ever 8-iron 168 yards, think a smooth 7-iron.



If the Olympics doesn't go well, golf won't be back in for another 100 years.



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STEPPIN' UP

The re-engineered Speed Step Crown helps increase clubhead speed.



FACTS & FIGURES

SUITABILITY: All golfers.

SHAFTS: The XR 16 comes standard with a Fujikura Speeder Evolution 565 shaft; the standard offering in the XR 16 Pro is the Tour-proven Fujikura Evolution II TS 665 shaft. Or choose from Callaway's extensive selection of shaft options to find the one that fits your swing.

LOFTS: XR 16 is available in 9°, 10.5° and 13.5°; XR 16 Pro comes in 9.5° and 10°. All models are adjustable between one degree lower and two degrees higher. LEFT-HANDED MODELS?: Yes, except for the XR 16 Pro 10.5°.

HOW MUCH?: \$580 or \$650 for XR 16 Pro. CALLAWAY SAYS: 'Callaway's renowned research and development team worked closely with aerodynamics experts at Boeing to achieve a new threshold in ball speed with the XR 16 driver. By pinpointing the size and placement of the re-engineered Speed Step Crown, engineers saved weight and lowered drag. The result is an increase in clubhead speed and, in turn, more ball speed.

"The extreme forgiveness of the XR 16 driver was accomplished thanks to the larger, high moment-of-inertia shape with a stretched crown, and a lower and deeper centre of gravity. All that forgiveness leads to more ball speed at every impact location, which can add distance for golfers of all ability levels. Callaway's next-generation R*MOTO Face Technology is nine grams lighter and thinner than in previous models, yet still stronger due to the use of new 8-1-1 titanium. The body is lighter, too, which leads to more ball speed across the entire face.

"Engineered for more advanced players who desire workability in their long game, the XR 16 Pro has a 450cc stretched head design, lower spin and a more neutral centre of gravity bias that is low and deep in the clubhead."

Contact Callaway Golf on 1800 217 777 or visit au.callawaygolf.com

CALLAWAY XR 16 DRIVER



CLINT MEACHAM

GA HANDICAP: 5.3

WHAT OUR TESTER SAID:

I definitely hit the ball ten to 15 metres further – it's almost like the clubhead generated topspin that helped the ball go further.

MODEL AND SHAFT PLAYED: Callaway XR 16 9° driver, fitted with a stiff-flex graphite shaft. FIRST IMPRESSIONS: This seems like a decent driver. I own a Callaway Big Bertha Alpha 815 driver and my first notion is that this model feels quite different. I don't particularly like the crown markings and patterns, while the colour scheme doesn't grab me, either.

VERDICT: The Callaway XR 16 driver performs better than it looks! The ball flight was higher than mine usually is, which was good as it delivered a trajectory I really liked. I definitely hit the ball ten to 15 metres further – it's almost like the clubhead generated topspin that helped

the ball go further. It's hard to fault the accuracy, too, as I think I hit every fairway bar one. The XR 16 feels solid at contact. There's a firmness to impact but it's not so firm that it's uncomfortable or daunting to strike. Impact is forgiving enough but perhaps not quite as much as the Big Bertha Alpha 815. I loved this driver – so looks can be deceiving!

WHAT I LIKED: The ball flight and the ease of using the XR 16, as in the lack of adjustability required with the clubhead features to hit it well straight away.

WHAT I DIDN'T LIKE: The crown markings didn't really suit my eye.



STEVE SANDERS

GA HANDICAP: 16.5

WHAT OUR TESTER SAID:

There was definitely some forgiveness to the XR 16, as I managed to drive it about as consistently as I ever have.

MODEL AND SHAFT PLAYED: Callaway XR 16 9° driver, fitted with a stiff-flex graphite shaft. FIRST IMPRESSIONS: The clubhead sits nicely at address and feels good to swing. One thing I noted – and it's something perhaps we overlook at first glance – is the grip. I don't know if it's thicker than normal but it feels good in the hands. I love the alignment aids on the crown. The design is flashy but it's one of the better drivers to line up with. Your eyes are drawn in more than they are to a single dot, for example. VERDICT: I set up the Callaway XR 16 for a draw and it drew nicely all day. If I aimed for

a draw, the ball started where I aimed and then drew back perfectly. And if it didn't draw it flew dead straight. There was definitely some forgiveness to the XR 16, as I managed to drive it about as consistently as I ever have. It's not the longest club I've ever hit (but was still long enough), yet the consistency and accuracy made it one of the best drivers I've ever hit.

WHAT I LIKED: The appearance. The graphics help you align properly and build your confidence levels.

WHAT I DIDN'T LIKE: Not as long as others but was certainly accurate.



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Some of the best golfers ever to pick up a club



reveal the best bit of advice they've ever had

WORDS: KEVIN BROWN PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTY IMAGES

here are thousands of tips out there to help you play better – but some work better than others.

We've all been given bits of advice that have helped us improve, nuggets of wisdom that have stayed with us, always there to fall back on when the game goes awry.

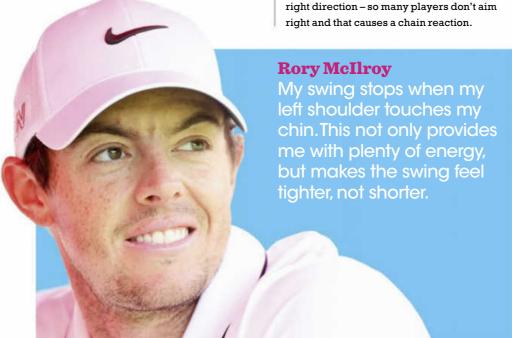
And that got us thinking ... what's the best tip the world's best golfers have ever had? This is what they said.

Tiger Woods

When I was young, maybe six or seven, I'd play on the Navy golf course with my pop. My dad would say: "OK, where do you want to hit the ball?" I'd pick a spot and say I want to hit it there. He'd shrug and say, "Fine, then figure out how to do it." He didn't position my arm, adjust my feet, or change my thinking. He just said go ahead and hit the darn ball. My dad's advice to me was to simplify. He knew that at my age I couldn't digest all of golf's intricacies. He kept it simple: if you want to hit the ball to a particular spot, figure out a way to do it. Even today, I can still hear him say, "Pick a spot and just hit it." When I'm making adjustments during a round, I know some of the television commentators theorise that I'm changing this or moving that, but really what I'm doing is listening to Pop.

Sam Snead

I always carved every round into 30-second pockets of concentration. From the time you study the conditions and pull a club from your bag, until the ball has landed, that's your period of concentration. Elsewhere, talk to your friends, watch the birds, do anything. If you try to maintain concentration for an entire round, you'll end up with a headache!



David Leadbetter

The flex you introduce in your right knee at address is one of the most important keys in any golf swing. Think of your right knee as an anchor, the point around which you wind and coil in the backswing. In other words, maintain the flex all the way

Sir Nick Faldo

to the top.

It happened by accident when I started playing as a kid at Welwyn Garden City Golf Club. I thought I was being deprived because practice-wise all I had was a green and one bunker and one flag. Little did I know that back then I hit every single golf ball at a target, but that was the most powerful thing ever because it's targeting. So it makes great sense to stick a club down and point it in the right direction – so many players don't aim right and that causes a chain reaction.

Tom Watson

The most fearful putt in golf is the downhill and left-to-righter. I make one small adjustment. I move the ball an inch forward in my stance and play the ball off my left instep. This helps me start the ball on line, even a little left, from where it still can fall in the hole on the high side.

Seve Ballesteros

When putting, exert the same pressure with both hands. If you are holding the putter tight with one hand and not the other, the putter will tend to drift off line as your arms work separately instead of together. Grip lightly with both hands – even a child should be able to pull the club from you without much effort.

Ernie Els

It came from my father when first learning the game back home in South Africa as a ten- or 11-year-old. He stressed the importance of delivering the clubface square – he always talked about focusing on the six inches on the takeaway and the six inches on the followthrough. I still work on that.

Greg Norman

The most important move when it comes to long driving is the takeaway, and when I'm all set for a big drive I try to 'glide' the club back from the ball for as long as possible. 'Low and slow' are the two key words.

Jose Maria Olazabal

One of the best tips I've had involves the 7-iron chip and run which has served me so well down the years. Grip down on the club and stand quite close to the ball, placing your weight slightly more on the left foot than the right, with the ball back in your stance. From here, you can swing straight back and straight through with your hands ahead of the ball at impact.

Jim Furyk

For years and years, my dad tried to get me to put aiming devices on the ground when I practised and I wouldn't do it. When I finally gave in and did it I became a much better ball-striker, so now I tell everyone else what my dad told me. If you want to become a better ball-striker, placing aiming devices to help you get aligned is crucial.

Mark Calcavecchia

During the early part of my career, I had an issue with flipping my hands over and hitting a big hook. I began working with Peter Kostis in 1984, and he got me to do three things to eradicate this. He told me to keep my hands inside the club, to clear my left hip and to straighten my left leg. This eliminated the left side of the course and set me up to hit a fade.

Tom Lehman

I always remember a tip Corey Pavin gave me in the middle of a Ryder Cup match. In a bid to help me conquer my nerves and cope with the pressure, he said: "No matter what you decide to do, only swing if you are 100 percent sold on the shot. If you are only 80 or 70 or 50 percent sold, you are not fully committed, so you are going to hit a bad shot."

Paul Lawrie

Take the club slowly away from the ball and build up speed as you hit it. My late coach Adam Hunter told me this the first day we worked together more than 20 years ago and I'm still using it today.

Louis Oosthuizen

Have patience. Patience is a virtue and you've got to think that, especially in big tournaments where everyone is hitting bad shots. The key is to forget a on what's coming up.

Gary Player 🕨

I was fortunate enough to p of my first rounds in Americathe greatest golfer who eve Ben Hogan. Up to that point had criticised my swing for flat. People said it needed t changed, but Mr Hogan tol your swing 'could never be He was right, you just have club under your wrist.

Vijay Singh

One of the best tips I had w
to start your downswing at
same speed as you started
backswing. This helps you
make a smooth start down,
which encourages all the
moving parts of your swing
to work together. If you rus
first move down, you lose synchronisation
and with that your chances of hitting a
solid shot.

Curtis Strange

The odds are that one of the first pieces of advice you ever heard was 'keep your head still'. But in order to make a complete weight shift on to your right side in the backswing, you have to allow your head and spine to move laterally to the right. Not a big shift, only four or so inches at most, but believe me that's an important four inches!

Tom Kite

The key to playing any golf course strategically is to play to your strengths and



Phil Mickelson

On the green, keep the shaft and your leading arm in a straight line at impact. It helps keep the putterface square to your intended line, so the ball sets off on line.

om your weaknesses. For ple, I'm an excellent wedge er, so I'll find ways to put self in positions where I can that wedge. Eve should try to play tstrengths in the safashion.

Jeff**S**luman

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squarely is increased, and even when I don't make good contact, the ball will still fly reasonably straight.

Tom Weiskopf

The most important fundamental is tempo—and having control over the golf club from the moment your swing starts back until you follow through. The thing that destroys everybody's tempo is too much speed. Once you snatch the club away with your right hand you don't have control, which isn't to say you need to swing slowly. You simply need to find a rhythm to suit your natural tendencies.

Ben Crenshaw

Someone told me putting is 70 percent line and 30 percent feel and early on in my career I began to line up short putts carefully and didn't look. You have to trust your first instinct and stick with it. Indecision kills you.

Colin Montgomerie

My career took a big step forward when I started practising holing 100 consecutive two-foot putts. The first 70 are relatively easy, but the reason you do this drill is for the last 30 balls. They're difficult because if you miss one you have to start all over again. There's pressure and it gets you concentrating, which is a good rehearsal for the real thing.



Putting cross-han has been critica me: placing you hand below you right on the grip makes it easier to set the face square to the line address and to keep it square throughout the s



George Coetzee

When I was 13, my mates and I used to go and play nine holes every day. One day, my dad took me to one side and said: "This nine-hole rubbish has got to stop. If you want to make as a golfer, you need to practise your puttin while they play nine holes." I did that for a bunch of years and now I am a pretty good putter. Without that advice I think I would be flipping burgers right now.

Bill Haas

Getting the right grip is crucial. When I was little I was a decent player, but I played a ten-finger grip. One day, my dad told me the there were no good players on Tour who have a ten-finger grip, so I needed to either interlock or overlap. From that lesson on I have overlapped and it has worked out pretty well.

Thongchai Jaidee

Balance is everything in golf so it would have to be to keep as stable as possible during the swing.

Alvaro Quiros

I'm still waiting for that one great tip! But a good swing is not just about one thing, there are many parts involved, so for me the most important thing is to have good rhythm.



Tommy Fleetwood

I was told to stick to you own game and play to your strengths rather than worry about what your opponents are getting up to.

Lee Westwood A great practice drill for me involves keeping the headcover on my driver and making practice swings ... lots of them. The club will seem heavier, which is good for slowing down your swing and promoting good rhythm. It's also a good warm-up exercise, stretching your golf muscles.

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Bernhard Langer

One of the best pieces of putting advice I have ever been given is always look at the hole when you make a practice stroke for a long putt. Stare at the hole for several seconds so that you imprint on your mind exactly what you need to do to roll the ball dead to the hole. I believe this process gives you better feel when it comes to the putt itself.



Padraig Harrington

The only universal thing golfers can do to improve their game – and that won't do them any harm – is hold their finish. That's it.

Richard Green

My best tip was not to get too involved with technique: I've always been an advocate for feel golf, to play on feel and to understand where you are and what you're doing and to trust your feelings.

Graeme Storm

I've had that many tips from various coaches but the best of the lot would have been Pete
Cowen's strong left-hand grip tip in bunkers. Basically what it does is keep the left hand all the way back and then you can throw the loft into the sand – you can spin out of plugged lies and all sorts. My bunker play has been phenomenal ever since!

Simon Dyson

Mine came from Pete Cowen as well and he told me to hit balls with my feet together while practising. So many people sway back and out of control, but this way you just swing and it's great for balance.

Gregory Havret

I regularly work on short putts with 12-14 balls from three to six feet – the most important shots in golf. You don't have to putt them all in – say, if I miss two today, you can always improve on that tomorrow.

Shane Lowry

Shots on and around the greens are everything so it's really important you put the necessary time into practice and sharpening up your short game.

Chris Wood

My dad taught me how to overcome the red mist descending. I was a bit of a fiery character and let things get to me, but Dad stressed the importance of being calm and collected and taking a deep breath or two, and if I could do that then things would work out.

Richard Finch

Make sure you have enough club. If in doubt, take more and swing smoother.

Pete Cowen

If you can manage to maintain good chin and knee levels throughout the swing then you've got a very good chance of hitting good solid shots and playing good consistent golf.

Joost Luiten

You've got to get it right from the word go, so pure and simple it would have to be to get the basics right first and then take it from there.

Sean O'Hair

The best advice I've had came from my mum. When you first come out on Tour there are a lot of good players and, to be honest, I never always looked at myself as being a top player. But Mum stressed, "Somebody has always got to win the golf tournament and it might as well be you!" That's stuck with me.

John Jacobs

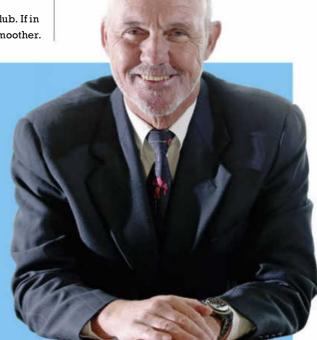
During the backswing the club must move both to the inside and upward. Turning the shoulders and body trunk to the right on a relatively flat plane largely creates the inside element. Swinging the left arm on a more upright plane largely creates the upward element.

Harvey Penick

Take dead aim. Once you address the ball, hitting has to be the most important thing in your life at that moment. Shut out all thoughts, other than picking out a target and taking dead aim. This is a wonderful thought to keep in mind all the way 'round the course.

Jack Nicklaus

The feet are the anchors of your swing, and most high handicappers play from the outside of their feet. During the swing, your weight should shift from the inside of your left foot to the inside of your right foot, and never beyond.



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ONE OF THE WORLD'S TOP MENTAL COACHES EXPLAINS HOW YOU SHOULD HAVE MORE BELIEF, WHAT YOU CAN LEARN FROM JORDAN SPIETH – AND WHY STROKEPLAY IS BEST.

WORDS: KEVIN BROWN PHOTOGRAPHY: JIM CARPENTER, GETTY IMAGES

olf is played in the head as much as on the ground and nobody knows that better than Bob Rotella, who has been conducting mind games with the world's top players for the past four decades.

Rotella, whose stable of current stars include major winners Padraig Harrington, Jim Furyk, Ernie Els, Darren Clarke and South Africans Charl Schwartzel and Louis Oosthuizen, claims that 90 percent-plus of golf at the highest level is in the head – and is convinced it's getting harder to succeed at the highest level. But there are plenty of mental tricks his players use to stand out.

Belief in yourself is everything. And when you don't win or aren't winning trophies, that's a heck of a challenge. In basketball if you're a decent team you tend to win at least 50 to 60 percent of your games, whereas in golf if you win one percent of the time you're really good. Tiger Woods is a prime example – I'll be more shocked if he doesn't get his old form back just because he's been there and done it since he was five. For him, it's all about going out there and believing in what he is doing and right now that doesn't seem to be happening.

Belief may be the be-all-and-end-all, though you also need the three Cs – confidence, concentration and composure. But when you're believing, it's easy to stay composed, it's easier to focus and not be bothered by anything. Look at Jordan Spieth's US Open win last year – he double-bogeyed the 17th and still won: think about how good that is!

That gave him the belief to think, 'Wow, I can make all kind of mistakes, including a double-bogey on 17, and still win.'

You've got to have the right attitude. It's the same with all

the top players – when their heads are in the right place, they can really play and when it's not, they're not so good. It shows how human they are. You need to learn how to win to handle the pressures. That's what top players live for – to be in contention on the weekend. That's when it's easier for most quys to deal with.

It's all about delivering the goods out on the course. When you see the top pros on the range they can all hit the ball and you'll struggle to tell who is a top player and who's just pretty good. Go to the pitching area and they can all get up and down. It's all about being in the right frame of mind when you step out onto the course.

5 You can take a leaf out of Jordan's book. He never overswings, never changes his gait, is always composed. He's not ridiculously strong with his ball-striking, but from 100 yards in he's just so good. He plays to his strengths, the things he knows he's good at.

The best players have a huge ego. The Tour game is about narrow margins. Your ranking in putting can be 100, but if you look at the difference between you and the No.1 it's miniscule. If you look at the fairway and greens hit stats, they're all bunched incredibly closely. At some point, you've got to ask yourself, 'Was I put on this earth to win?' Think about how highly you must think of yourself to achieve that.

Club golfers need to hit the ball in a way that they can repeat. Don't try to shape shots, hit it high, hit it low. Find one simple way – there's plenty of good pros around who can help you do that – and stick to it.

Spend a lot of time practising your short game because every hole in every tournament is going to end with a pitch or putt. Find a driver, 3-wood or hybrid you can hit well and regularly find fairways with and then get really good from 100 yards and in. Then you can go and play.

Stay on an even keel and take nothing for granted. I've been really, really impressed with what Jordan Spieth (and Lydia Ko) has done this past year, but what will he be like in 20 years? This game can beat you up. If he spends the rest of his life

comparing how he's doing to last year, it could drive him nuts trying to live up to it. But if he has his head together and puts everything into perspective, it could be pretty neat and then you have another Jack Nicklaus.

Play more strokeplay. That's real golf! When you have to count every shot, it's tougher. Every weekend, guys go out and play fourball betterball, or say, "That's good" to a three-footer. But strokeplay makes you mentally tough.







the pathways

to distance.

CLINT MEACHAM

GA HANDICAP: 5.3

The distance through the bag with the TaylorMade M2 irons was exceptional. It sounds strange but I almost picked up too much distance!

MODEL AND SHAFT PLAYED: TaylorMade M2 4-iron to approach (gap) wedge, fitted with stiff-flex steel shafts.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS: The oil-can colouring and look is cool and modern. These irons feel light, however in swinging them they come across as being very aerodynamic. It feels like you don't have to force the clubs to keep them on plane during the swing. **VERDICT:** The distance through the bag with the TaylorMade M2 irons was exceptional. It sounds strange but I almost picked up too much distance! I overshot several greens, but that's a real positive as the extra distance was significant. I also liked the trajectory. Getting the ball up in the

air quickly felt easy. They were also more accurate and any wedge shot I struck was spot on, too. The clubheads of the M2s appear to be quite large and they do come across as a higher handicapper's iron, but they work incredibly well! They are hugely forgiving; it didn't feel like I ever missed the sweet spot even though I obviously did. With one 5-iron struck out of the toe in particular, it was incredible how well the ball reacted for such a poor strike.

WHAT I LIKED: The M2s' forgiveness, smoothness and ease of use. WHAT I DIDN'T LIKE: The look is modern but they appear as though designed for high handicappers.





GA HANDICAP: 17.6

WHAT OUR TESTER SAID:

I did notice the extra forgiveness of the M2s, as several times my mis-hits didn't travel as far offline as I thought they would.

MODEL AND SHAFT PLAYED: TaylorMade M2 4-iron to approach (gap) wedge, fitted with stiff-flex steel shafts.

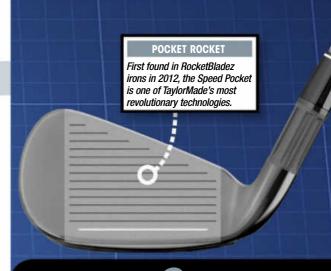
FIRST IMPRESSIONS: They're nice irons to look at – I like the dark grey colour of the clubheads. There's a definitely lightness to the clubs, not necessarily in the head but overall. I currently use a set of TaylorMade RSi 1 irons, which feel heavier in the head, whereas these M2s seem light from top to toe. My initial thought is I like that lightweight feel, plus they feel very good addressing the ball.

VERDICT: The TaylorMade M2 irons are very similar to my RSi 1 irons for feel at impact and the way the ball reacts off the clubface. I didn't sense a huge difference between the two sets. I did notice the extra forgiveness of the M2s, as several times my mis-hits didn't travel as far offline as I thought they would and shots weren't punished as badly as they should have been, but I still wouldn't say there's a huge variance in forgiveness compared to the RSi 1s. I'd say the same for distance, accuracy and trajectory, too. But I like the RSi 1s so that's a good rap for the M2 model.

WHAT I LIKED: The look and colour scheme of the irons

WHAT I DIDN'T LIKE: It's hard to pick any one thing, but in the end maybe I just didn't fully adjust to the irons' lightness.





FACTS & FIGURES

SUITABILITY: All golfers, especially players seeking more forgiveness.

SHAFTS: A choice of REAX 88 High Launch steel shafts or M2 REAX graphite shafts, in addition to numerous additional custom shaft options.

SET COMPOSITION: M2 spans 4-iron through to pitching wedge and approach wedge, with a sand and lob wedge also available.

LEFT-HANDED MODELS?: Yes.

HOW MUCH?: \$169 per iron in steel or \$189 each in graphite.

TAYLORMADE SAYS: "M2 irons are the embodiment of TaylorMade Golf's pursuit to equip golfers with both maximum distance and playability in a game-improvement iron. Designed for golfers who would benefit from an iron that prioritises both distance and trajectory, while also delivering great forgiveness and feel, the M2 iron is designed for complete performance. By pushing the boundaries of innovation, the engineers behind M2 created a dominant blend of distance, peak trajectory, look, sound and feel that will give many golfers performance they didn't know they were missing.

"In creating the M2 irons, engineers employed many innovative features, including a new, proprietary fluted hosel, 360-degree undercut, Inverted Cone Technology, a new 3D badge and the company's patented Speed Pocket technology.

"A significant amount of mass is trapped in the hosel of all irons. To position the centre of gravity low in the M2 iron, TaylorMade's engineers utilised a new fluted hosel design to remove discretionary mass from the hosel, redistributing it lower and further back in the clubhead. The M2 iron also features an advanced topline construction – a 360-degree undercut that functions to increase the unsupported face area while saving weight to lower the centre of gravity."

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THE SHOTS **HOW TO PLAY ALL THESE**

- 1 Drive to a tight fairway
- 2 Long carry over water
- 3 Downhill chip off a tight lie
- 4 The opening tee shot
- 5 Fast, short downhill putt
- 6 Under the lip of a bunker
- 7 First iron shot after a shank
- 8 Delicate lob over a bunker 9 Drive with water right
- 10 Blind pitch to a tight pin





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Long carry over water

Even when you know you have the firepower to clear the water, its sheer presence can make you do things you wouldn't normally do – like trying to hit the ball harder than normal, or help

it up into the air. Instead, accept the ultimate key to making the carry is ball speed – and that comes from quality of strike. Here are some key thoughts to help you improve yours.

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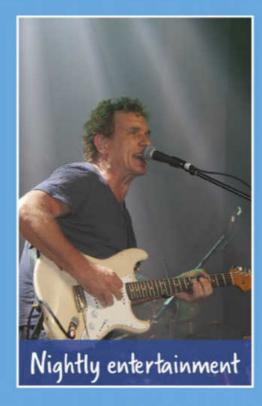
your lead side.



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Downhill chip off a tight lie

On any downhill shot the ground is higher behind the ball, making heavy contact a bigger danger. And when the club is moving slowly, as on a chip shot, any early contact is fatal ... and that's what adds the fear factor to the shot. Here are three simple rules for promoting clean and solid contact.





Shoulders match slope

Your key set-up thought is to keep your shoulders level with the slope. On a good lie play the ball under your chest, your hands level with your shirt buttons. As the lie gets tighter move the ball further back ... though keep your hands in the same position to increase shaft lean.



Make a wrist hinge

Allow your wrists to hinge on the way back, the clubshaft parallel to the ground with the hands opposite the trail thigh. This creates a slightly steeper arc to your action, helping you find the more descending attack angle that aids solid contact when the ground is higher behind the ball.



The opening tee shot

By Karl Morris, Tour performance coach

Many club players find the opening shot the scariest one of the whole round. That's often because they inflate its importance, but extra pressure from being watched can also play its part. Change your perception and focus to take the fear out of the first shot of the day. Here's how.

Recognise that your opening shot counts exactly the same as your second to the ninth or third to the 14th - one shot. As 'Extraordinary Golf' author Fred Shoemaker said, if you walked to the first tee knowing you were going to top it but that you were going to play great afterwards, you'd be happy to top it.

O Dismiss any notion that the opening shot of the day sets the tone for the whole round. It's an unhelpful perception that simply adds pressure. The fact is that it doesn't. If you top it, it doesn't mean the rest of the round will be bad, any more than a good one guarantees a low score.

If you are conscious of being watched on the tee, it reveals your attention is very broad. Instead of focusing on the shot, you are apt to consider aspects like the embarrassment from hitting a poor one. So narrow your attention down by giving yourself a simple task on the shot, like brushing the tee as the club swings through. When your mind is apt to swim, an attainable, simple goal like this brings in your focus and stops your mind wandering into those unhelpful areas.





Short, fast downhill putt

You feel you should hole these putts because they're quite short. That in itself adds pressure; but also, the fact the ball can so easily slip four feet past creates another layer of tension. But here are some thoughts that will help you approach them more positively, and a drill to build the best stroke rhythm.



Try the two-tee drill

The most effective stroke on downhill putts is a rapping-type rhythm, with a cut-off follow through. It helps keep your eyes and head steady, and your blade square through impact. Here's a drill to help you develop it.

Stick two tees in the ground, one opposite the toe of the putter and one opposite the heel. Place your ball between the two. Hit the ball; your aim is to strike both pegs simultaneously. Do this ten times and you start to feel the short, square 'pop' this putt needs.



Cut off the stroke

It's so easy to steer the ball down to the hole. Do this and your eyes and head will move, costing accuracy. Instead, commit to a short follow through. It gives you a better chance of holding the face square.

Double the break

The slower the ball moves, the more break it'll take – and that's why club golfers so often miss these putts on the low side. So as a rule of thumb, assess the break you think the putt needs, and then double it.

Pace is key

Aim to die the ball in; you should almost be able to read the maker's logo on its last roll. When the ball is going this slow it'll drop if it catches any part of the cup – and that effectively makes the hole bigger.



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Under the lip of a bunker

The fear factor here is posed by that sharp, steep lip, which will claim any ball that does not rise swiftly off the face and leave you back where you started - and possibly in

your own footprints.

The key is to stay calm and focus on the two aspects that create quick rise - speed and clubface loft.



2 It lowers the base of your

arc, helping you hit the

3 It's a legal way of testing

sand from under the ball.

sand texture and weight.

briskly through the tee with the face open; if it rolls

Practise this until you can take the tee cleanly five

times in a row - then try the same technique with a

shut, or if you decelerate, you will strike the ball.

ball on the sand.





CCA

KUMHO TYRE



First shot after a shank

By Karl Morris, Tour performance coach

Everyone is determined to label a shank as a mental problem – even to the extent of people banning the word in case they 'catch' a dose! But dealing with the next iron shot after a shank with a change of thoughts or attitude is probably the least effective way to change the outcome.

This is because a shank is a physical, technical thing, the same as a top or a duff. The reality is that the ball has come out of the wrong part of the club – the hosel – and it's done that because either you or the club have moved outward, towards the ball during the swing.

So a shank is a physical change that needs a physical solution, and if your action is prone to hitting them, the best course of action is a lesson or two with a PGA pro. But out on the course, you should still base your approach around that principle.

When it comes to dealing with the next shot after catching one out of the pipe, realise that a lot of golf fixes are paradoxical. For example, try to cure an out-to-in attack by taking it away on the inside and you'll only create a big loop in your swing, that sees you come over the top even more.

Do what feels right – standing further away or addressing the ball out of the toe – and you will only increase that outward move into the ball. So instead, address the ball out of the heel. It takes a slight leap of faith, but it promotes the reverse move with the club moving towards you ... and a return to solid contact.





Delicate lob over a deep bunker



Why keeping still won't work

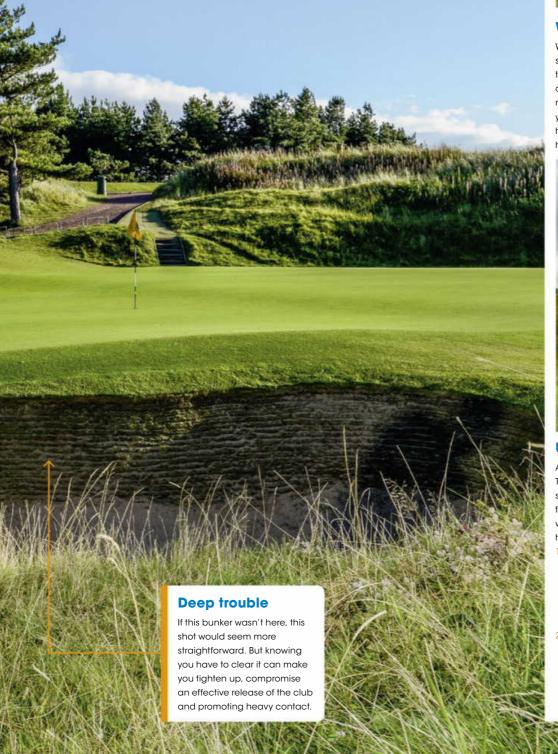
Whatever the lie, when you're faced with a shot that demands clean contact the huge temptation is to try to guarantee it by keeping as still as possible. However, if your body stops moving, your action loses momentum and you are forced to flap at the ball with your hands and arms - the very motion that causes



Use your knees

All good chippers have good knee action. They are the suspension system that lets you send the ball off smoothly. Get into the habit of feeling the shot through your knees and you will create consistently solid contact. Here's how:

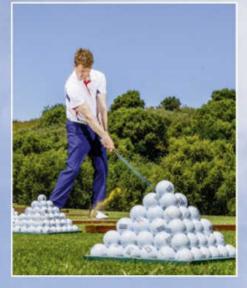
- 1 In a good chipping stroke the pivot of the body carries the hands through the ball, creating rhythm and momentum. To feel this motion, let the right knee move towards the flag with the club as it swings down and through.
- As the right knee moves, so do the hips and it's this subtle hip turn that carries the hands through. This motion helps you keep moving through the shot - guaranteeing the momentum to send the ball forward without having to flick the hands.





Drive with water right

When Tour pros are faced with a tough drive they will tend to bring out their 'stock shot' – a shape of shot they know they can rely on under pressure. Here is a drill to help you identify and work on your own stock shot. It may not result in the prettiest drives you're capable of, but sometimes just getting the ball into play is all that counts.



Learn your stock shot

Identify two landmarks or targets 15 paces apart at your driving distance on a practice ground. Pick the ball flight you usually favour (draw, fade, straight, low, high) and hit a set of 15 drives, plotting their approximate dispersion.

Now choose an alternative ball flight and repeat the test with another 15 drives. You may find your preferred ball flight is not always the most accurate!

Repeat two or three more times. If the results start repeating, you can build confidence in the ball flight most likely to hit your target zone ... even on the scariest of tee shots.

Build a safe shape

When you know which way the ball is going to spin in the air, drives like this lose a little of their fear factor ... and that is the basis of a stock shot. Develop a drive shape you can repeat for these tricky occasions.



Blind pitch to a tight pin

Many greens – and often par-3s – are protected not just by water and sand, but also slopes. Here we have a good example of the kind of problems caused by missing a perched green. The shot is blind,

there is little room to work with and I have an intimidating wall of rough in my face. Dealing with it takes an honest appraisal of your ability ... and a couple of clear swing thoughts.

Complete the swing

A simple thought for shots like these is to complete your swing on both sides of the ball.
Underhitting is worse than overhitting, so err on the side of being too purposeful than too hesitant.

Select the shot

There is a phrase I often use for shots like this: "conservative attitude for a confident swing". Playing the shot you are most confident of getting right will give you your best chance of success.

Factor the slope

Upslopes rob your shot of distance. So to assess how hard you need to hit the ball, gauge your distance to the pin, gauge the height of the slope and add the two together to get your final distance.

Gauge the swing

Move back from the ball for your practice swings. Make them facing the flag, feeling the connection between swing length/speed and the distance. When it feels right, move in and play while the feeling is fresh.





INO DELIEVEN

A natural progression within the golf ball landscape has seen Titleist add the new DT TruSoft to its line of balls, replacing the DT SoLo within the Titleist family in the process.

For golfers who prefer a soft feel, the new DT TruSoft is the best performing ball in its class – a result of Titleist's rigorous research and development and industry-leading manufacturing technologies. DT TruSoft features a new core and cover formulation engineered by Titleist R&D to deliver incredibly soft compression feel with impressive distance and short-game playability.

DT TruSoft is designed with a fast, very low compression core and soft pure ionomer cover – the softest core construction and ionomer cover blend Titleist has ever used. The company calls it the softest, best-performing DT model Titleist has ever made. Additionally, the DT TruSoft finds that crucial equilibrium between feel and performance.

"We've balanced our core and cover combination to deliver a great feeling ball with performance on every type of shot," said Matt Hogge, Titleist golf ball R&D's director of product implementation. "When it comes to making low-compression golf balls, what's often sacrificed is spin performance on shots into the green. Any shot to the green without sufficient spin will hit and release quickly, making it extremely difficult to stop the ball close to the hole or hold the green. There is clearly a point of diminishing returns. We've moved away from that trend with DT TruSoft by maintaining really good short-game spin relative to those products."

SRP: \$34.95 per dozen.

Contact: For more details, visit www.titleist.com.au

NEXT GENERATION

TaylorMade's new M2 line – which includes the driver plus matching fairway woods, hybrids and irons (*pictured*) – completes the 'M' family of clubs.

A five-gram weight saving within the crown of the M2 driver was directed to the sole, resulting in a centre of gravity that's 26 percent further back than M1 with the adjustable weight set to the rear. This relocation helps achieve ball speed and more forgiveness, raising the moment of inertia on off-centre drives.

The fluted hosels of the M2 irons see the discretionary mass from the hosel moved lower and further back in the clubhead. They also feature an advanced topline construction – a 360-degree undercut that functions to increase the unsupported face area while saving weight to lower the centre of gravity.

SRP: \$649 (driver), \$399 (fairways), \$299 (hybrids), \$169/\$189 (irons).

Contact: For stockists or more details, phone 1800 700 011 or visit

Contact: For stockists or more details, phone 1800 www.taylormadegolf.com.au





Boeing's aerodynamics experts played a crucial role in developing the XR 16 line from Callaway, collaborating with the golf company's R&D team to concoct a full line of drivers, fairway woods, hybrids and irons for the new year.

The unlikely union achieved a new threshold in ball speed with the XR 16 driver. By pinpointing the size and placement of the re-engineered Speed Step Crown, engineers saved weight and lowered drag to increase clubhead speed.

The XR 16 and XR Pro fairway woods plus XR OS hybrids feed off the same engineering gains plus the company's Forged Hyper Speed Face Cup, which has been made hotter and thinner for even more speed and a large sweet spot.

To create the new XR OS irons, Callaway's designers took its Face Cup technology and made it even faster, implemented a wider sole design and placed the centre of gravity in a location that helps optimise launch conditions. RRP: \$580/\$650 (drivers), \$390/\$410 (fairway woods), \$340 (hybrids),

\$168.75/\$187.50 (irons).

Contact: For more details, phone 1800 217 777 or visit au.callawaygolf.com

G-FORCE

Developing knowledge and drawing inspiration from such diverse sources as dragonfly wings and 18-wheel semi-trailers, Ping has launched its new G series of drivers, fairway woods, hybrids and irons, again advancing speed, distance and forgiveness to unprecedented levels without sacrificing other performance attributes. This year Ping also went one step further, creating a new club category with the G Crossover, combining the best of hybrid and iron technology.

A close-up photograph Ping chairman and chief executive
John A. Solheim took of a dragonfly became the inspiration
for the primary innovation in the G series driver. He was
intrigued by the wing structure and shared the photo
with a group of engineers. Inspired by biomimicry, an
approach to innovation that emulates nature's time-tested
patterns, they created Dragonfly Technology. The complex
exoskeleton design yields Ping's thinnest (0.43-millimetre)
and lightest crown to date, saving eight grams while
creating an intricate and stable structure. The weight savings
helped drive the centre of gravity lower and deeper than any
Ping driver, increasing dynamic loft and elevating moment of inertia
significantly for maximising distance and forgiveness.

Researchers also studied the base flaps that minimise large-scale vortex shedding behind 18-wheel semi-trailers and integrated their learnings into the G drivers to improve aerodynamics and increase speed.

RRP: from \$700 (drivers), from \$180 (irons), from \$390 (Crossover). Contact: For stockists or more details, phone (02) 9524 8233 or visit www.ping.com



AMATOUR HOUR

Bridgestone Golf used all it learned from more than 300,000 consumer golf ball fittings to produce the best tee-to-green performing balls ever made for amateur swing speeds. Bridgestone's new 2016 Tour B330RX and Tour B330RXS balls have been specifically engineered to produce longer drives and better spin around the green for players with swing speeds below 105mph, using new proprietary AMATOUR Core and SlipRes Cover technologies.

AMATOUR Core, a new engine of the golf ball, is 28 percent softer than the average firm

Tour ball core and utilises a steeper gradient in softness from the inner part of the core to the outer region, resulting in faster ball speed and more reduced spin off the driver than ever before. In fact, the proprietary gradient technology in its core allows Bridgestone to accomplish in one layer what its competitors accomplish in two or three, leading to a smoother energy transfer and more power generated by the B330RX and B330RXS balls.

Both models have received an injection of greenside spin as well, thanks to Bridgestone's new SlipRes Cover. This cover leads to increased friction that keeps the ball more stable on the clubface, which results in more spin on short shots. Simultaneously, SlipRes has the reverse effect off the tee, lowering driver spin due to that type of impact's recoiling force.

The B330RX is designed for players who swing below 105mph with distance off the tee as the priority. The B330RXS is designed for players who swing below 105mph with spin around the green as the priority.

RRP: \$65 per dozen.

Contact: For more details, phone 1300 138 353 or visit www.bridgestonegolf.com.au



FROG-LIKE FLEX

A unique design and technology combines to deliver exceptional traction, mobility and comfort in FootJoy's FreeStyle shoes, which help generate maximum power by providing greater freedom of movement throughout the golf swing. How? F.R.O.G.S. Technology incorporates a super-flexible new SoftMax translucent outsole that offers both a softer feel and extra grip, while a new FTF 3.0 midsole compound is the brand's softest and most comfortable yet. The Softspikes Tour Lock system and new translucent Pulsar cleats deliver exceptional low-profile grip with a dynamic, frog-like flex.

"FreeStyle is arguably FootJoy's most imaginative and distinctive shoe ever and will particularly help golfers who would benefit from increased freedom of movement when swinging the golf club," said Doug Robinson, FootJoy's vice president of design and development worldwide. "By drawing inspiration from a tree frog and emulating their incredible grip and flexibility properties in the texture and functional elements of an outsole, our design and development team has created something truly unique in the golf shoe market."

SRP: \$279.95 with BOA; \$249.95 with laces.

Contact: For stockists or more details, phone 1800 660 535 or visit www.footjoy.com.au/Freestyle





TINY AND TIDY

Garmin Australia has added three new products to its golf line, including its first golf club swing sensor: TruSwing.

The Approach G10 (above right) is a sleek, pocket-sized golf GPS device that fits almost anywhere. Compact, lightweight and user-friendly, it comes preloaded with data for more than 40,000 courses with no additional fees or subscriptions. The G10 measures precise distances to the front, back and middle of the green in large, easy-to-read numbering on a 1.3-inch sunlight-readable display. It also displays distances to course targets like bunkers and water hazards, as well as layups and doglegs.

Stylish, sleek and lightweight, the Approach S20 (above centre) boasts the new AutoShot round analyser feature, which automatically records the location and distance of every shot and uploads it to a Garmin Connect account for post-round analysis. Through the CourseView auto updater on the Garmin Connect mobile app, Approach S20 users can have updates to the courses they play the most sent to their watch automatically, making sure they always have the most up-to-date course data.

TruSwing is a small, lightweight and easy-to-use sensor that measures swing metrics. TruSwing syncs wirelessly to a variety of Approach devices so golfers can get instant swing feedback on their wrist (*above left*) after each swing. For even more information, golfers can use TruSwing with the recently updated Garmin Connect mobile app to get detailed data such as 3D animations, or to review their entire swing session.

RRP: \$199 (Approach G10), \$299 (Approach S20), \$229 (TruSwing).

Contact: For more details, phone 1800 235 822 or visit www.garmin.com.au

PLAY LIKE A PRO

Many professional golfers change their ball every hole to ensure uncompromised performance. GolfJet was created to empower its customers to play with this same spirit – to play like a pro. To do this, GolfJet offers premium Tour-level golf products, plus a powerful app, at a competitive price point plus the added convenience of free home delivery and more.

How? Visit golfjet.com.au and sign up to become a member in less than five minutes. As a member, you control what products you want delivered and when, with no lock-in contracts. Your delivery comes in a handcrafted box, aptly named the 'JetPack'. Members build their JetPack from a range of Tour-calibre balls with the freedom of choosing nine or 12. Plus each JetPack includes a new size-matched AirGrip super-soft cabretta leather glove, a set of Blade wedge tees and a ball marker – priced from \$39.95.

The GolfJet connect app completes the experience. The 'JetPack + Connect App' combine to bring GolfJet members the ultimate golf experience. Members can invite friends to their very own tour, search more than 28,000 courses worldwide including more than 900 in Australia, post-round updates, track key stats, access self-help content and earn reward points.

Contact: For more details, visit www.golfjet.com.au







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WORDS & COURSE PHOTOGRAPHY: BRENDAN JAMES



ort Stephens is known for its wonderful beaches. There are 26 of them ... some are sheltered within the bay, which is great for families, while the ocean beaches have a reputation for their superb surfing conditions.

This beautiful port, which is bigger than Sydney Harbour, certainly does offer an idyllic beach getaway mixed with natural and culinary attractions ... at least that's what I found.

More than 150 bottlenose dolphins call the Port home and there are plenty of tours departing from Nelson Bay that will get you up close. In winter, you might even spot a whale or two as they head north on their annual migration.

If you love seafood you will love this part of the world too. Apart from the great fishing – where you can catch everything from kingfish and Australian

salmon, to flathead and mulloway – this is where you will find some of the best oysters in Australia, straight out of the waters of Port Stephens.

This all sounds nice for nature lovers, surfers and travelling foodies. "But what about the golf?" I hear you say.

Don't worry; Port Stephens, just three hours' drive north of the Sydney CBD, has that covered too. There are six quality courses to be found in the region, five of them are south of the Port and the main resort areas.

The one course to be found close to Port Stephens' north shore is at Hawks Nest. It is only four kilometres north of Nelson Bay, as the crow flies across the Port, but is a 50-minute drive between the two towns.

That said it is well worth the trip to **Hawks Nest Golf Club** if you happen to be staying south of the Port.





Hawks Nest is the only course featured here that has a Prime Ministerial seal of approval. For many years, John Howard and his family called Hawks Nest home for their annual summer vacation. When he wasn't power walking the streets, he was striding the rolling fairways of the course. And who could blame him? This seaside hideaway at the southern end of the New South Wales Great Lakes region lies between the beautiful Myall River, near where it flows into Port Stephens, and the crashing surf of the Pacific Ocean.

Over the past five decades, Hawks Nest has evolved into an excellent sandbase course from its humble nine-hole beginnings.

Course architect team Kel Nagle and Mike Cooper were commissioned to redesign the existing front nine and create another nine holes in the late 1980s. The finished product is deceptively tough from the back markers while offering an enjoyable challenge to the high handicapper or novice from the front tees. Its location makes it susceptible to sea breezes, especially strong southerlies, which was no doubt a factor when Nagle and Cooper laid out their par-72 design. The golfer who possesses the ability to play well in the wind and do it from a variety of lies will score well at Hawks Nest.

The 352-metre par-4 1st is a great indicator of what is to come. The fairway is reasonably wide and straight from tee to green. Out-of-bounds lurks beyond a row of gum trees to the left of the fairway and another row of big gums flanks the right. The longer hitter can hit too far down this fairway and be faced with a downhill or uphill lie from a deep ripple in the fairway, about 100 metres from the green. When the prevailing southerlies blow this can be a tough second shot ... especially being your first iron shot of the round.

One of the great features of Nagle and Cooper's design is their use of the natural rolling landscape. The course comes as close as 180 metres from the white sands of Bennetts Beach and borders undisturbed sand dunes. Hence, many fairways dip and rise subtly between hundreds of gums, banksias and ti tree. The sweeping dogleg left par-5 6th is one such hole. The fairway pitches and rolls like a sheet of corrugated iron that has been gently laid between thick clumps of trees. Sticking to the middle of the fairway on this 473-metre hole is a tough task when a southerly wind whips across, pushing shots towards the wall of trees. The green is a wide target, but it is surrounded by thick vegetation so missing by more than a few metres will be penalised.

The challenging design aside, Hawks Nest has rarely been in better condition than in recent times. The quality of the playing surfaces would be the envy of any private city club with a bigger maintenance budget, which is a great testament to the hard-working ground staff of this terrific layout.

From the Pacific Highway it is a leisurely 35-minute drive to the biggest town in the area, Nelson Bay. The best golf course in this neck of the woods can be found en route at Medowie. Pacific Dunes is the most recent addition to the golfing landscape in the Port Stephens region and it has established itself as one of the 'must-play' courses north of Sydney.

Designed by Sydney-based architect James Wilcher and opened for play in 2005, Pacific Dunes was most recently ranked at No.27 in Golf Australia magazine's list of the Top-100 Public Access Courses in 2015 and was rated



No.69 in this magazine's Top-100 Courses ranking earlier this year.

Laid out on a gently rolling sandy landscape, Pacific Dunes has two distinct nines. The front nine is heavily bunkered and its fairways wind between tall timbers, several lakes and natural wetlands. The more open inward half also features several water hazards but is dominated by long stands of large angophoras and swamp mahogany trees.

While Wilcher's layout stretches to a lengthy 6,411 metres from the tips, the course still manages to incorporate some very good short par-4 holes and imaginative par-3s. One of my favourite short two-shotters at Pacific Dunes is the 297-metre par-4 3rd. In terms of risk-and-reward design, this hole is a gem and presents questions and options for long hitters and short hitters as you stand on the tee. The contouring of the slight dogleg-right fairway and the placement of four huge bunkers down the right side create a visually daunting view from the tee. Long bombers can attack the hole by flying their tee shot over the bunkers, skirting thick scrub to the right, to find a small landing zone just short of the putting surface.

The effect of an upgrade in 2009 to the drainage has significantly improved the conditioning of many holes, particularly on the front nine. In recent years, Pacific Dunes' presentation is first class. The Santa Ana couch fairways have a carpet-like thatch making them beautiful to hit off, while the bentgrass greens and their tightly-clipped surrounds are outstanding.

Adding to the quality of the layout now is a new \$3 million golf and country club, which opened for business on March 1. The stunning new clubhouse

offers several dining areas, terraces overlooking the course, a large fully stocked pro-shop and a 200-seat function centre. There's even a kitchen garden where kids can play and explore.

While one course celebrates the arrival a luxurious new clubhouse, another in the area is still getting on with business despite losing their clubhouse in a fire last September.

Nelson Bay is the hub of this holiday playground. The iconic marina is the centrepiece of a town where holiday apartments and resorts are in abundance. It should be no surprise given the tourist appeal of the town that Nelson Bay Golf Club has been one of the most popular courses in the region for many years. And, despite losing its clubhouse, it is business as usual for the club with temporary facilities established and the 27-hole course has not been affected at all.

Such was the popularity of the Nelson Bay course in the 1990s that the club moved to expand to 27 holes to allow more people to experience the layout. Melbourne-based Pacific Coast design was commissioned and created a fantastic additional nine holes that has easily been absorbed into the original 18. These holes venture further into the adjoining national park, where the designers found the land rose and fell sharply in many spots. For this reason, there are some spectacular holes carved from the thick, rainforest-like vegetation. The 490-metre 12th could easily rate as one of the toughest par-5s in NSW. This is a tight hole with dense bush just off to either side of the fairway that continually bends to the left and climbs a long hill. Stick to the



right of the fairway for the best possible approach to an elevated green (for your third shot) that doesn't come into full view until you are within 170 metres. (From overhead, this hole must almost look like a horseshoe.) The designers were careful to incorporate the characteristics of the original 18 into their plans. And why wouldn't they? These holes offer plenty of variety and some breathtaking experiences, from the opening tee shot at the par-4 1st, which is elevated high above the fairway and offers a brilliant vista, to the approach at the par-4 9th, with a picturesque pond and fountains behind the green. Combine the fine 27-hole layout with the hospitable welcome you'll receive in the temporary clubhouse, which still boasts views of the course from its perch above the 1st fairway, and you will certainly enjoy your time at Nelson Bay.

Nelson Bay's nearest golfing neighbour is **Horizons Golf Resort**, which has been plagued with financial and ownership problems during much of the past decade. But the future of the Graham Marsh and Ross Watson-designed layout is looking much brighter after being purchased last July by long-term members and local businessmen Peter Rickard and Selva Saverimuttu. The former owner, Korean construction company Le Mellieur, went into receivership in 2010 and bids to sell the course were blocked by their Korean financiers seeking a return on the \$12 million they were owed.

An aborted sale in 2011 led to Rickard and a syndicate of club members operating the course under licence and their management and leadership has turned the course around.

It seems like only yesterday that Horizons was hosting an Australasian and European Tour co-sanctioned event in the ANZ Championship and was receiving positive reviews from the players and media. That was 12 years ago, and it wasn't long after that the slide towards trouble began.

I played the course in late 2009 – perhaps when the course had almost hit rock bottom – and was shocked at the condition of the layout, which

this magazine had once ranked the best resort course in NSW. One of the trademarks of the layout used to be its impeccable year-round conditioning but a lack of investment by Le Mellieur saw the playing surfaces suffer.

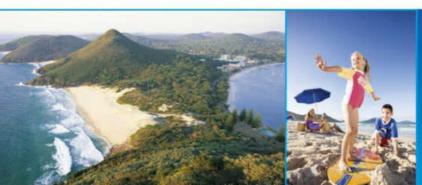
Under Rickard and Saverimuttu the course is making good progress with the presentation of the layout significantly better than it has been in past years. There is, however, still work to be done to recapture the glory days of Horizons, but the 'ship' is moving in the right direction and will once again complement the fine design that still offers plenty to be excited about.

From a design standpoint, most holes at Horizons are worthy of mention but it is the collection of par-3s that I always find interesting and challenging. For mine, the most testing of them comes late in the round at the 17th hole. At 153 metres, distance is no great problem, but the right edge of the hole is flanked by wetland scrub including a high retaining wall drop-off right beside the putting surface. A bunker ten metres short of the green makes for a deceiving tee shot, which must also avoid a large bunker left of the green.

If your Port Stephens golf holiday starts or finishes in Sydney, you must find time to play a round at **Newcastle Golf Club**, 35 minutes south of Nelson Bay and just a stone's throw from the famous towering dunes of Stockton Beach.

Newcastle is one of the underrated gems of Australian golf. Earlier this year it ranked No.18 in *Golf Australia* magazine's biennial ranking of the nation's Top-100 Courses. The course burst into the elite top-20 of this magazine's ranking nearly 15 years ago now on the back of a dramatic leap in presentation and minor tweaks to the design and it has been entrenched in the leading five percent ever since.

The course hasn't looked back since the late '90s when the conditioning hit a new benchmark and is now achieved on a monthly, if not daily, basis. This presentation of beautiful couch fairways and firm, smooth-rolling bentgrass greens now fully complements the fantastic Eric Apperly design and



The entire Port Stephens region offers myriad adventure and holiday activities, including many that stem from the area's majestic natural beauty.



Relax, Stay & Play in Nelson Bay!



Subject to availability. Rates are for self-contained accommodation and based on four or six share only. Excludes all school holidays, public holidays & long weekends. Golf cart hire additional.



construction work of Fred Popplewell Snr, which has stood the test of time since it opened for play in 1936.

Apperly, who had already created Sydney's Avondale and The Lakes courses, was engaged to design the second nine holes of the original layout that had been laid out by founding members of the club 22 years earlier. Apperly recognised the quality of those holes and incorporated seven of them into his 18-hole design that changed very little in 75 years. In recent times, the club has commissioned acclaimed course designer Bob Harrison to oversee some improvements to the already impressive layout.

Carved out of a forest of eucalypts and angophoras, the fairways at Newcastle bend, twist, roll and sidestep their way over a sand dune-based landscape unequalled in the region. Although the course is situated only a few kilometres from the busy industrial area and port of Newcastle, the density of trees separating the fairways give a feeling of complete isolation from one hole to another.

In my opinion, the entire course oozes world-class features. But there are three holes that always deserve even higher acclaim. The trio of the 368-metre par-4 5th, 367-metre par-4 6th and 148-metre par-3 7th are not only stand-out holes on the front nine but these holes are among the best sequence of three holes in the country.

The par-4s in this group offer wonderful examples of changes in elevation and call on the player to position their drives perfectly for a shot to the green. The tee shot at the 5th is a blind one over a hill, which then cambers right-toleft with the slight dogleg and descends to the green. At the 6th, heading in the opposite direction, the fairway rolls left-to-right with a steep hill cutting into the fairway from the left. The fairway turns left around the base of the hill, up to an elevated green protected by two deep bunkers cut into the front.

If these two holes don't get your heart pumping, the classic short 7th will. There is no room for error from the tee as your shot must be nailed through a chute created by dense clumps of tall timbers and all care must be taken to avoid a pod of bunkers short right and another long and left. Missing the putting surface makes for a difficult chip and putt to save par.

As you walk from the 18th green you will realise one thing ... a single round at Newcastle is barely enough.



WHERE TO PLAY

HAWKS NEST GOLF CLUB

Location: Sanderling Ave, Hawks Nest.

Green fee: \$35 + free drink; \$20 (member's guest).

Website: www.hawksnestgolfclub.com.au PACIFIC DUNES GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB

Location: Championship Dve, Medowie.

Green fee: \$68 (18 holes, weekdays); \$88 (weekends).

Website: www.pacificdunes.com.au

NELSON BAY GOLF CLUB

Location: Dowling St, Nelson Bay.

Green fee: \$40 (18 holes, weekdays); \$45 (weekends).

Website: www.nelsonbaygolf.com

HORIZONS GOLF RESORT

Location: Horizons Dve, Salamander Bay. Green fee: \$55 (18 holes, seven days). Website: www.horizons.com.au

NEWCASTLE GOLF CLUB

Location: Vardon Rd, Fern Bay.

Green fee: Visitors must hold a GolfLink handicap. Times available all day

Sunday, Monday, Friday and at limited times on other days.

Website: www.newcastlegolf.com.au

WHERE TO STAY

RAMADA RESORT SHOAL BAY

Overlooking the picturesque white beach and agua waters of Shoal Bay, Ramada Resort Shoal Bay provides a luxury range of options from standard studios through to waterview, beachfront and bayview rooms with a choice of one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments.

The resort has a special play and stay offer, including two nights' accommodation with three rounds of golf for only \$385 per person twin share (valid until June 30). www.ramadashoalbay.com.au



MANTRA AQUA RESORT

Nestled on the shores of Port Stephens, Mantra Agua features spacious apartments and expansive views of the bay and surrounding areas. There are 110 apartments spread across three buildings all nestled around a central lagoon-style pool and spa as well as two BBQ entertaining areas. www.mantra.com.au





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riches. There are more than 100 courses to choose from, making it one of the most popular regions for golf visitors.

There are the celebrated famous names like Royal Troon, Turnberry and Prestwick and the remote Machrihanish. They stand alongside lesser-known gems and those layouts which have hosted Open Championship qualifiers and big national tournaments.

Off the course, the links to poet Robert Burns are everywhere, as are the chances to sample some fine whisky, and as you make your way from one course to another the beautiful scenery can become mesmerising.

Golf Australia deputy editor Steve Keipert tested his game at four of the Ayrshire Coast's most famous layouts, while editor Brendan James went in search of some hidden gems and treasured links beyond the Open Championship trail.

AYRSHIRE'S FANTASTIC FOUR

Western Gailes Golf Club was my first of four ports of call along the

top-league amateur championships through its long history, Western Gailes started in 1897 as a seaside escape for Glaswegian golfers seeking a site where year-round golf was more viable.

The course sits on a long, thin stretch of land wedged between the railway line and the sea. The land is so lengthy and lean that the distance from the 5th tee at the course's northern tip to its 14th tee to the south could be two or three miles but the layout is never wider than about 300 yards.

It's a club for true golfers, but is a course often overlooked due to its close proximity to the more vaunted Open venues of Troon and Turnberry, plus Prestwick, the birthplace of golf's oldest major. In reality, it's an integral part of a run of four outstanding links and I was grateful for the chance to sample it.

Western Gailes' 6th and 7th holes are worth the green fee alone. The club calls the 6th the only links par-5 in the world that's all carry on a direct line from tee to green. It's a statement that takes a moment to decipher but once you see the bending shape of the fairway you



soon realise that the tee-to-green line is not ideal and how a thoroughly different path is required. The putting surface is set in a dell with slopes feeding balls onto the green from the right to crown a tremendous threeshotter. The 7th is a brilliant downhill par-3 from a tee overlooking the beach to a green ringed by swales and sand.

The layout features 13 par-4s but into the wind at least a few will play as par-5s, while trekking into a southerly wind from the 5th to the 13th is a brutal test with the reward being a downwind beginning and end to the round. Visitors are entirely welcome and effectively become members for a day, although in truth a day is the bare minimum to allocate to getting to adequately know Western Gailes.

Playing the host venue for this year's Open held extra significance for me, as the 1989 Open at Royal Troon Golf Club was the first major championship I ever watched on television. It was an epic finish - Mark Calcavecchia holing one of the most outrageous shots in history in the final round from atop a grassy bank left of the 12th green (a 'slam dunk' pitch with the ball never touching the ground) to join Queenslanders Wayne Grady and Greg Norman in the Open's first four-hole play-off. Twice that Sunday Norman looked to have the Open in his grasp only to have the American pinch it away. Most gallingly, after Calcavecchia drove wildly on the final play-off hole, the Shark busted a drive so far up the 18th that his ball trickled into a bunker jutting into the right side of the fairway that no one else had reached all week.

I've also always loved the club's motto, Tam Arte Quam Marte, or, "As much by skill as by strength." That last hole of the 1989 play-off epitomised this notion perfectly, with Calcavecchia's canniness from the rough thwarting Norman's raw power.

Like Western Gailes, the Old course at Troon is an out and back layout

that generally plays downwind heading out and into the breeze coming home. Only holes 8 and 12 switch direction within the two nines. Many astute Open contestants regard Troon's inward half as the toughest nine on the Open rota.

The most famous hole at Troon is its shortest. The 'Postage Stamp' 123-yard 8th is picturesque and evil all at once (the lone bogey in Norman's closing 64 in '89 came at the 8th). From an elevated tee the shot to the tiny green below must combat the wind. Balls drifting left find a grassy dune, while right is a deep bunker. Erring short and long offer unfriendly options, too. It offers a simple equation: hit the green or work hard to rescue par or even bogey.

The only change to Troon in recent times came at the 11th hole. It was a par-5 up until and including the Open in '89, when 490 yards was still enough real estate to be called a par-5. Now it's Troon's toughest hole as a long par-4 where the tee shot must fly a stretch of thick gorse to an obliquely set fairway. It was here that Ernie Els saved a miracle par in the 2004 Open after his ball finished suspended partway up a gorse bush. More gorse flanks the left edge while lining the right side is the railway line, a stone fence for which is just a few paces off the green.

In the same vein as several other top links, Troon isn't particularly spectacular but rather it challenges from start to end. Even the downwind opening holes make holding half wedge shots into the greens a difficult task.

Golfers should include Prestwick Golf Club on a Scottish itinerary for no other reason than to experience the place where the Open Championship began. The first 12 Opens were held there, 24 in total but none since 1925 as the growth of the championship rendered the boutique Prestwick club too logistically difficult to retain on the rota,



66 Any modern

course architect

presenting a blueprint for a design like

Prestwick might just

particularly when it came to spectator flow.

Open history drips from the Prestwick dunes. Willie Campbell lost the 1887 Open when he needed four swings to escape a bunker on the 16th hole, losing to Willie Park Jnr and thus earning the offending pot the name "Willie Campbell's Grave".

The quirky links is in the heart of town. In good weather you're guaranteed to see locals walking dogs or taking an afternoon stroll across the course, meanwhile Prestwick Railway Station sits beside the 1st tee and the railway runs alongside the right edge of the hole. Old Tom Morris' blueprint, which began as 12 holes, features shapes you won't see replicated anywhere else. In fact, any modern course architect presenting a blueprint for a design like Prestwick might just be led away in a straitjacket.

be led away in a straitjacket.

For instance, the 3rd is a par-5 split in half by a wall of sleepers and a broad bunker.

The 5th is a blind par-3 where hope-filled tee shots are struck across a huge dune with a white marker as an aiming guide. The 17th green is tucked over another big dune with a hidden bunker to catch weak approach shots, yet firing in an over-clubbed approach will not only miss this deep pit but catch a steep slope at the rear of the putting surface that feeds balls back towards the hole.

Characteristics like this make Prestwick a layout worth playing twice, as you'll learn so much on a first loop that you can put into practice

a second time around. And, during your round, check out the plaque commemorating the first Open Championship, which can be found near the boundary fence to the right of the 14th hole.

Malcolm, the starter on **Trump Turnberry Resort**'s Ailsa course this perfect Sunday evening, gave me some sage advice as he guided me towards the 1st tee. Other than at the par-3

15th hole, he said, hitting towards the centre-rear of every green won't put you in any trouble.

I love simple tips that can be recalled throughout the round, yet as my score drifted to six-over-par through as many holes it felt like the course had my number. Then, with my hopes of a memorable score dashed, I began playing smarter. I saved par at the difficult 8th hole while adopting "The Malcolm Strategy", as I dubbed it, then birdied the tough par-4 10th and began a run of pars that, aside from two careless double-bogeys at 13 and 14, carried me all the way to the clubhouse. Playing one club extra on approach shots rescued a dire score and turned it into something respectable.

Turnberry's most famous layout, host of the 1977, 1986, 1994 and 2009 Open Championships, is currently

undergoing a significant redesign to eliminate some architectural shortcomings and enhance its stunning coastal setting. My hope is that the resort's new owner, the inimitable Mr Trump, includes Malcolm in the redesign process. As it happens, Martin Ebert is the course architect



Machrihanish there

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entrusted with recrafting Willie Fernie and Mackenzie Ross' masterpiece and the work began shortly after Inbee Park won Women's British Open at Turnberry last August.

What already lay there is something to behold. The first three holes give no real clue to the seaside holes upcoming but from the 4th onwards the course unmasks hole after hole of stunning dune-lined fairways, culminating in the iconic 9th and 10th holes by the lighthouse. These holes stand to become even better in the redesign, evolving from a pair of par-4s to a risky and dramatic par-3 and par-5 combo.

The clifftop holes give Turnberry its trademark but the layout is far more than just a pretty face. The course feels 'busy' as every new test provides plenty to absorb. The holes change direction constantly and vary greatly in length and strategy; fairways dip and roll and you can't get into a groove of playing the same shots or in the same wind around the Ailsa course. That's one characteristic I hope Ebert and his team

Once you get to the 15th, a smart and scenic par-3, pause for a moment to reflect upon the remnants of an airstrip built across the Ailsa course during World War II as the land was transformed into a training station and paved for aeroplanes and hangars. Like so many of the great Scottish links, there's a tantalising history to the place not always evident at first glance.

- Steve Keipert

Located just north of Troon, Kilmarnock was originally designed by Theodore Moon but with the addition of a third nine in 1997, the Barassie course was born out of nine original holes and the nine new offerings.

This is a fantastic course with few if any weak holes, which is why it is often chosen to host national events as well as final qualifying for the Open when it is played at Troon or Turnberry. There is a mix of genuine links holes with a handful that more closely resemble a parkland course. For mine, the links holes are its finest with quirky greens protected by natural humps and hollows as well as plenty of pot bunkers. You will probably be surprised like me when you reach the 396-yard par-4 11th

hole, which is a sharp dogleg left around the edge of the course

boundary fence and features four pot bunkers on the inside corner of the fairway. But when you round the turn you will be faced with a shot into a green with no bunkers, but it does have a 'Valley of Sin'

hollow in front. A terrific two-shot hole!

Another Open qualifier course, Glasgow Gailes Links lies just to the north of Kilmarnock and is home to the Glasgow Golf Club, which dates back to 1787, making it the ninth oldest golf club in the world. The course opened for play in 1892, crafted originally by Willie Fernie and then redesigned in 1912 by two-time Open champion Willie Park Jnr.

Glasgow Gailes is a classic links where rippling fairways are lined by gorse and heather, while the bunkering is natural and plentiful. Masters and Open champion Sandy Lyle reckons it is one of "world's great tests of links golf". I

couldn't argue with him on that.

If you enjoyed the challenges of Kilmarnock's Barassie Links and Glasgow Gailes, there is another Open qualifier course less than ten minutes' drive north.

Irvine Golf Club dates back to 1887, playing on a Willie Ferniedesigned layout on beautiful links land set back from the ocean.

The great James Braid extracted the best from the location when he oversaw the redevelopment of the course in 1926. His work remains today and with stunning, enjoyable holes that follow the natural contours of the landscape and even provide views over the Firth of Clyde.

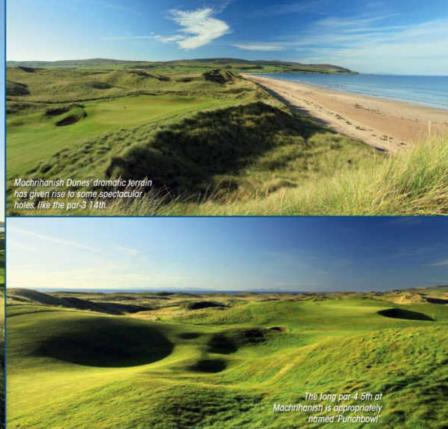
GEMS AND JEWELS

Golfers visiting the Ayrshire Coast are spoilt for choice. If you are planning on going to the Open Championship at Royal Troon later this year, take your clubs as you won't have any problems getting a teetime on a quality course (if you plan in advance), especially if the more famous layouts are full.

There are lesser-known but still great courses to be found everywhere throughout the Scottish south-west.

For example, Kilmarnock Golf Club and its Barassie course, is the southern neighbour to Western Gailes and one of the exceptional links courses along the coast here, stretching south to Turnberry.





Irvine boasts just two par-3s and the first of them, the 177-yard 8th known as 'Saddleback', is a gem. It's a tough tee shot with sand ringing the green in the form of two bunkers five metres short, two more to the left and three pots to the right. But it is the 'Saddleback' shape of the putting surface - with balls being fed to the fringes from the heart of the green - that makes it a tough test.

With the final putt holed at Irvine, it is an easy 15-minute drive to Ardrossan, a seaside town where passenger and car ferry services provide a link to the Isle of Arran and, in summer months, Campbeltown on the isolated Kintyre Peninsula. In fact, Kintyre is so remote many Scots have never ventured there. That said, it is worth the journey as you will find two must-play courses.

Machrihanish Golf Club is ranked in the top-15 in Scotland and for good reason. Old Tom Morris created the original links in 1879 and some changes were made by J.H. Taylor in 1914, while in the 1940s some holes were recrafted due to the development of the adjoining airport.

While other courses showcased here have gained a reputation for their stern challenge and Open qualifier or host pedigree, Machrihanish is much less about the test and more about fun. Don't get me wrong, it is a challenge but it is one of the most enjoyable courses I have ever

played and much of that can be attributed to the design of the layout.

This is not an overly long course but every hole is very different to the one before it and the one after. There are punchbowl greens, raised plateaus and others cut into the edge of dunes, while blind tee shots, approaches from a variety of lies and the ever-present breeze keep you enthused no matter how bad you're hitting it.

There's all this and one of the best opening holes in all of golf. The elevated tee of the par-4 1st hole, known as 'Battery', lies just outside the pro shop and is perched above a beach. Your opening blow must carry the sand and find the angled fairway beyond the back of the beach. While most courses would play the beach as out-of-bounds, at Machrihanish the beach is a lateral water hazard, so players can be tempted to be more aggressive with their drive knowing they can finish on the beach and make a recovery shot ... if the tide is out.

I had an absolute ball playing Machrihanish. I didn't really care about my score and had fun just trying to play the wide range of shots the layout demanded. Having played the 18 holes in just a tick over three

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WHERE TO PLAY

WESTERN GAILES GOLF CLUB

Location: Gailes Rd, Irvine, Ayrshire. Green fee: £135 (to Sept.), £90 (Oct.). Website: www.westerngailes.com

ROYAL TROON GOLF CLUB

Location: Craigend Rd, Troon, Ayrshire.

Green fee: £150 (visitors only on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays until Oct. 8).

Website: www.royaltroon.co.uk

PRESTWICK GOLF CLUB (pictured below)

Location: Links Rd, Prestwick, Ayrshire.

Green fee: £150 weekdays, £175 weekends, plus £65 for additional rounds in the same week (April to

Oct.); £90/£115 (Nov. to March). Website: www.prestwickgc.co.uk

TRUMP TURNBERRY RESORT

Location: Maidens Rd, Turnberry, Ayrshire.

Green fee: £250 weekdays, £275 weekends; £180 and £195 for resort guests (the Ailsa course will remain closed until June 2016).

Website: www.turnberry.co.uk

KILMARNOCK GOLF CLUB (BARASSIE LINKS)

Location: Hillhouse Rd, Barassie, Ayrshire.

Green fee: £60 (per round) weekdays, £80 (day

ticket) weekdays; £70 (per round) weekends, from

May to September. Website: www.kbgc.co.uk

GLASGOW GAILES GOLF CLUB

Location: Gailes Rd, Irvine, Ayrshire.

Green fee: £95 (per round) seven days; £115 (day

ticket), from May to September. Website: www.gaileslinks.co.uk

IRVINE GOLF CLUB

Location: Sandy Rd, Irvine, Ayrshire.

Green fee: £60 (per round) seven days; £70 (day

ticket) weekdays.

Website: www.theirvinegolfclub.co.uk

MACHRIHANISH GOLF CLUB

Location: Machrihanish, Argyll.

Green fee: £65 (per round) seven days; £95 (day

ticket)

Website: www.machgolf.com

MACHRIHANISH DUNES

Location: Machrihanish, Argyll.

Green fee: £75 (per round) seven days; £95 (day pass).

Website: www.machrihanishdunes.com

WHERE TO STAY

PRESTWICK OLD COURSE HOTEL, **PRESTWICK**

Established in the mid 1800s, this hotel is just a pitching wedge from where the first ever shot in Open Championship history was struck. The building, once the favourite drinking hole of Prestwick caddies, has retained many of the original features based around a golf theme, such as the stained glass window, the golf coat of arms that sits proudly at the front of the building. Rates: From £39 to £75 (not at peak times). Website: www.prestwickoldcoursehotel.com



THE ROYAL HOTEL, CAMPBELTOWN

Overlooking the picturesque Campbeltown Harbour, this historic hotel has been fully refurbished in recent years with all 23 guest rooms offering modern luxuries with an old world feel. There is a shuttle available to take you to Machrihanish Dunes as well. Rates: From £79 to £129 for a classic room. Website: www.machrihanishdunes.com/stay/ theroyalhotel





hours - which I reckon has a lot to do with the routing where tees are close to the preceding green - there was plenty of time for another round, which produced a whole new list of shots as the wind dropped off into the evening.

Nearly 130 years after Old Tom pegged out his routing for Machrihanish, a new course - Machrihanish Dunes - was developed next door. The course is the brainchild of Australian businessman Brian Keating who, like me, fell in love with the old Machrihanish layout but, unlike me, had the resources to create a modern links on the same coastline.

While the courses are neighbours, the land Machrihanish Dunes covers is far more dramatic. If you have ever had the privilege of playing Barnbougle Dunes in Tasmania, imagine the same dramatic dunescape and pump it with steroids. Machrihanish Dunes is by far the most undulating links layout I have played. It is a rollercoaster ride from opening tee shot to your final approach into the 18th green.

Keating commissioned David McLay Kidd to design the course, with a raft of environmental restrictions implemented that forced him to route his holes to areas through, over and around massive rugged dunes. Only the greens and tees were shaped and there was no heavy machinery used in the construction of the layout.

The ongoing maintenance is carried out without chemicals or pesticides, while dozens of Hebridian black sheep roam the course, trimming the rough and fairways between October and April.

Paths between holes wind over lengthy stretches up, down and between the dunes, which adds to the physical challenge but were essential to avoid the sensitive environmental areas of the property. There are quite a few blind shots, both from the tee and fairway, while the putting surfaces pitch and fall like angry waves. What the old Machrihanish course offers in variety and fun, Machrihanish Dunes provides equal doses of torment and difficulty, which I find just as enjoyable. - Brendan James

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WHAT HAPPENS ON TOUR ...

Tour De GORSE

THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF A SCOTTISH GOLF TOUR WITH YOUR MATES.

WORDS: MATT CLEARY

The closing hole at Kingsbarns, near St Andrews is a lang, testing par-4 with a wee burn fronting the green.

114 MARCH 2016 | golf australia

e called it the "Tour De Gorse" and it was a golf trip in the grand tradition thereof. Seven days in Scotland, 14 men, one giant party bus. We played four rounds of the world's best links golf and saw two days of The Open at St Andrews. We even fit in a day at the Ashes Test at Lord's. It was a grand tour, a Grand Slam of a tour, even. We ate like Vikings, drank like kings, and enjoyed (mostly) really, really good times.

Mostly? Yep – 97 percent of the time it was a magnificent tour. Magnificent golf and food and fun and sun. (Well, there wasn't a lot of sun. It's Scotland: even in summer it shares more with Lapland than Queensland; and several varieties of weather were represented.) But we learned many Important Lessons about golf and golf touring and even ourselves. And should you plan to tour Scotland, or anywhere really, with a group of like-minded golf hounds, you could avail yourself of these Important Lessons.

Play Kingsbarns. If you've played Barnbougle Dunes and Barnbougle Lost Farm, or New South Wales Golf Club, or even those fine-looking new ones on King Island, you'll have experienced some of Kingsbarns' theatre.

Gnarly and gorgeous, salt-licked winds, world-class golf real estate

carved from the heather. Hillocks and basins, bulbous fairways, greens of truth and justice. Now, you could make a very good case – and more esteemed golf architecture nerds than this hack have done so – that northeast Tasmania's gnarly green beasts rank above this beauty on the eastern coast of the Kingdom of Fife. But for mine, Kingsbarns is Barnbougle without the rough edges. Kingsbarns is Barnbougle with burns and tam o' shanters, whisky and haggis. Like Barnbougle, it's gob-dangling gorgeous. Hell, don't take my word for it – get onto Google, check out the pics. Kingsbarns is Barnbougle with a manicure. Kingsbarns is unbelievable.

Play North Berwick. What a great old chunk of Scotland. Brilliant joint. Classic links – nine holes out, nine holes back – in and out, often with and against the wind. Old stone walls in the middle of fairways. There's one old wall that cuts across the front of the 13th green. I chipped over it and drained a 15-footer for par that I'm still talking about – indeed you're now reading about – today. The hole is called "Pit" and the playing notes advise: "Don't argue with the wall – it's older than you." Sage. Caddies were young blokes and old, and all spot on with putting lines and ball-finding.







In the grand old clubhouses of Scotland there are honour boards for local members who had a hole-in-one before Australia had free settlers.



A hazard called "The beach" lines several holes. There's a view of a famous old rock in the sea called Bass Rock - "The Bass" - which is in the Firth of Forth, which is enjoyable to say after a few pints. There's a par-4 called "Perfection" (which is good, but you know ...). There's a par-3 called "Redan", which they reckon is the world's most-copied one-shotter: elevated green, big bunker short left, big bunker long right, slopes right to left, 190 yards from the tips. "How about this?" remarked my mate Smithy and there was no argument. Again, Google it. It's a cracker, North Berwick.

Use caddies. The locals know where the bad things are. And while the gorges and heather and all that are very pretty and add to the

greater atmosphere, you don't want to be wading about in the lost-ball deathgrass if you can help it. And with a caddie, you can help it. Well, you know, at least you can make a plan about where to hit the ball before you hit it.

Similarly putting is a lot easier. The caddies know where the secret bumps are. If the green on the 13th at North Berwick always falls towards the sea, these people will tell you that, along with several other things, some of historical import. And here's the thing: if you take the personal decisionmaking out of a shot, be it a 6-iron from 180 metres riding the wind, or a straight-breaking ten-foot putt, it's one less thing to think about. Just load up, baby, and be the ball.

Immerse yourself in the history. Golf was being played on the vast majority of the courses in Scotland before there was an Australia as we know it. In grand old clubhouses there are honour boards for local members who had a hole-in-one before Australia had free settlers.

The Scots might not have invented golf - there's a Chinese game called 'Chuíwán' meaning "hitting ball" with a stick, which was around in the Song Dynasty (960-1279) - but the Scots invented the game as we know it. And as that wise man said, it's the greatest game ever played.

Hire a big bus and a local to drive it. We found a 17-seater from a joint near Edinburgh Airport, and then put an advertisement in the Jobs Classified section of the St Andrews University website. After expecting a holidaying student to offer themselves up for six days driving



a mob of half-pissed Australians around the Kingdom of Fife, an e-mail arrived from a gem in human form - Tommy Smith, estate manager of St Andrews University

On time, every time. Smarter than the GPS. Went so many extra yards. One of the nicest blokes you could meet, who used the 400 quid-plus tip we plied upon him to take his family to Disney World in Florida. Win and win. Great fellah. Hiring a driver was one of the best things we did.

Tour with non-golfers. Half-arsed types, those who "can take or leave golf either way" need not apply. It's a golf tour. You want to see the castles or art galleries while others are playing golf, find yourself a nice Contiki Tour and knock yourself out.

One of our party - Good Bloke, Terrible Tourist - played one, yes one, round of golf, preferring to wile away his hours drinking pints and smoking cigarettes. Now, he'd paid up front for all his golf, perhaps 800 Australian roubles' worth, and nobody was put out financially.

But we'd spent many (admittedly enjoyable) months organising a Ryder Cup-style teams event among our even number of tourists and it was thrown out by one Terrible Tourist. And one Terrible Tourist can become a Resented Tourist. And a Resented Tourist is a Divisive Tourist. And nobody wants that. To that end ...

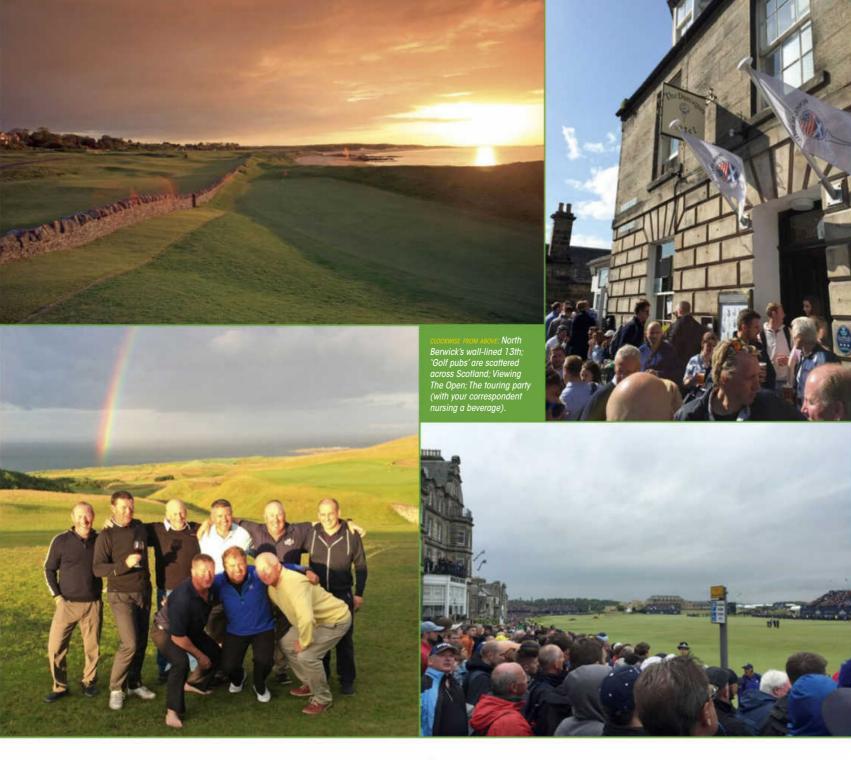
DON'T Go for too long. A week is a long time in politics and golf touring. The belching of the Tour Pisspot may not be as

funny on the 1st tee of day eight as it was on day one. Tour for ten days, tip-tops.

Spend many enjoyable hours organising a Ryder Cup-style points system. We assigned teams - Clan Dalglish versus Clan Souness after the Liverpool and Scotland football champions from days of yore. You could make the teams Old Toms versus Young Toms. Wallaces versus Bruces. Whatever. But a daily prize scheme and scoring format, all that, makes for great fun and banter while you're enjoying the following apres-golf capital-D "Do" on a Scottish golf odyssey.

Eat like Lefty. When Phil Mickelson won the 2013 Open Championship at Muirfield, he attributed the win to a "secret weapon": a medium-rare ribeye steak with a watercress salad and slowroasted tomatoes and mushrooms that he feasted upon each evening while staying at North Berwick. A fine strategy.

Similarly (sort of) after each round, our 14-strong party gathered in grand old clubhouses and sat together on long tables and ate like Phil, and Vikings. Tremendous food, tremendous fun. Great thick hunks of bread, rare and delicious meats, and haggis presented in ever-more ingenious ways. White sauce, sautéed, shish-kebab'd. It was never shish-kebab'd, but my, the local haggis, whatever these chunks of mystery meat are, is fair dinkum delicious. And a perfect accompaniment to a fat black stout or full-bodied Spanish rioja while you're reading out scores and trying to shame the shameless. To wit ...



Tour with those without official GolfLink handicaps. Sign whatever - but everyone needs to be on an even keel.

Our party came from across Australia, the UK and Hong Kong, and featured club players and social ones. And of the latter, handicaps were a best-guess estimate at best. There was one fellow whose mark of 18 could've been 36, and we'll talk of him in the next stanza. There was another fellow who proffered a handicap of 21 and won the first round with 40 Stableford points and a game closer to 12. The fellow who won the next two days - playing off 12 and then ten - also scored 40 points. Those of us off 'normal', 'official' GolfLink handicaps would amass 30 points at best, and be relatively pleased, such were conditions. On Day Four, when we'd finally convinced the winner of Days Two and Three that he was an eight-marker, he shot 42 points - two-over off the stick - at Kingsbarns in a rain-blizzard. And everyone flat-out refused to pay him. Terrific bloke; bigger thief than Ronnie Biggs.

Schedule a day of rest. We played four rounds in four days at North Berwick (brilliant old links and Open qualifying course), Scotscraig (a heathland course we played in a wind which blew the pros off St Andrews), Lundin Links (world's 13th-oldest golf course situated on wild and woolly land by the sea) and Kingsbarns (Barnbougle with a manicure) and it was all - and I do mean all - gob-dangling good. It was magnificent golf, the greatest links golf you will ever play.

And we'd do it again just like we did. But we'd put a day of rest in the middle.

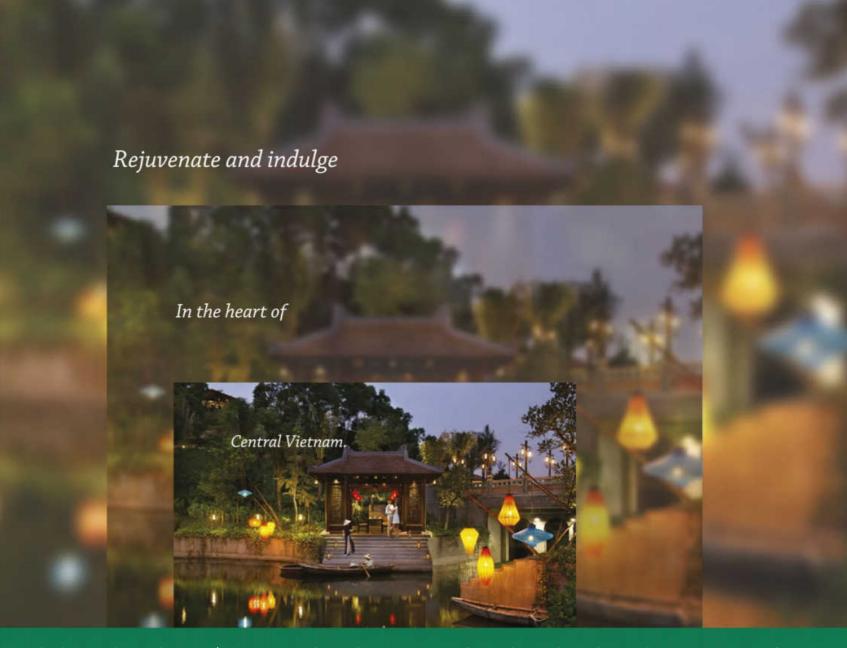
Four days golf in a row without carts, even with caddies lumping your clubs about ... well.

Some years ago I competed in the World Championship of Rogaining, which is a bit like orienteering for two days at night-time, and afterwards I slept for many days covered in welts, vowing to never again compete in the World Championsip of Rogaining.

Four days straight of golf wasn't as bad as that. And it's true, professionals play four rounds in a row without appearing to feel any ill-effects. But nor do they eat and drink their body-weight in haggis and local black stout, every day and long into the night, for four days in a row, waking to scoff a haggis McMuffin before a 7am tee-time. One would suggest.

EXPERIENCE TWILIGHT GOLF AT THE FEDERAL GOLF CLUB





STAY 3 PAY 2 OFFER* AND ENJOY YOUR 3RD NIGHT ON US FROM USD 340 PER NIGHT.

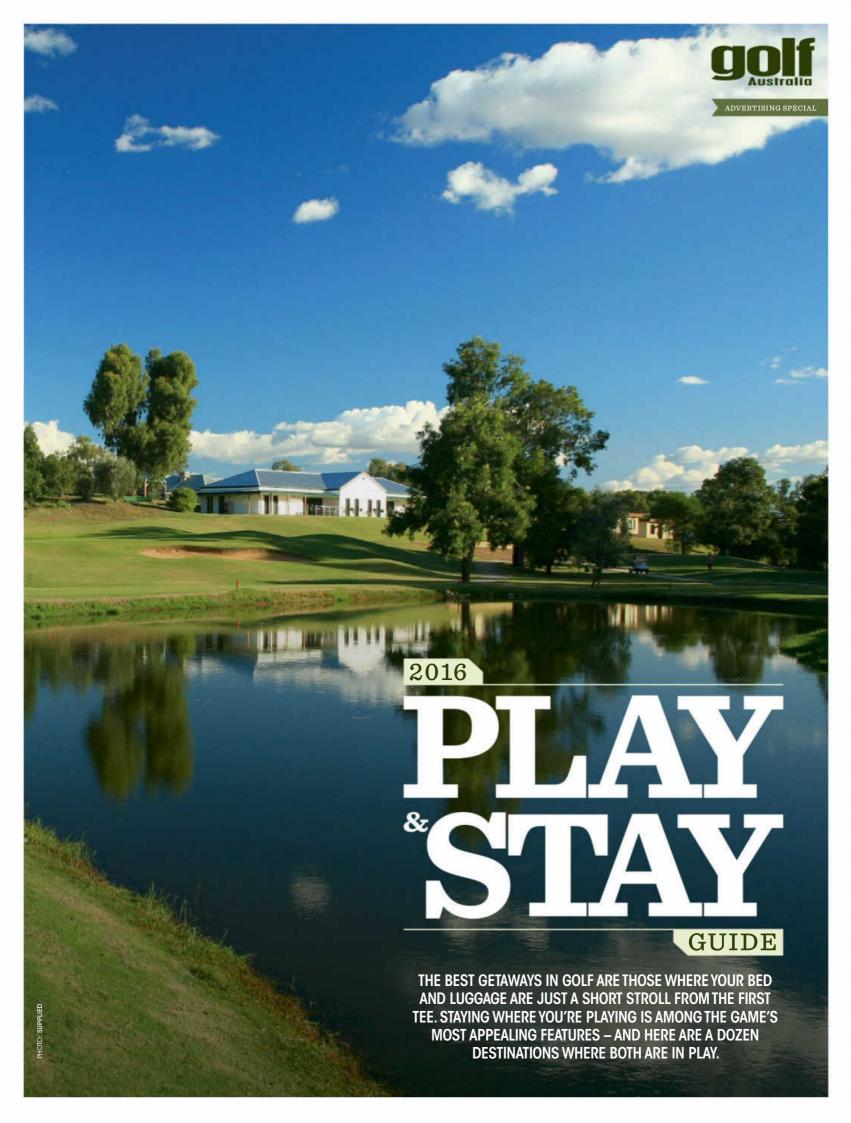
Rest your heels at one of the stunning pool villas. Play a round of golf at the 18-hole Sir Nick Faldo golf course or indulge in a time-honoured spa treatment with your loved one. Offer is valid until 19 December 2016.*Terms apply.



Sanctuary for the Senses



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estled just outside the Central Queensland coastal town of Yeppoon, Capricorn Resort and the championship golf course are the perfect location for the avid golfer to relax and play golf on a spectacular course. The layout was designed by world-renowned American golf architect Karl Litten and opened in 1992 to rave reviews, with beautiful landscapes and a litany of memorable holes. The course has to be on every golfer's 'bucket list'. The layout winds through the lush native bushland and

around the plentiful wetlands filled with local wildlife. With a total of 6,542 metres from the back tees, the course is a true test of golf but there are four sets of tees made to suit all abilities.

The resort has two practice putting greens and a full-length driving range, and has consistently been ranked in the Top-25 publicaccess courses in Australia and, winning more than 15 PGA awards for tournaments held there. The signature hole is the 11th. A 180-metre par-3, this beautiful hole is guarded by bunkers short and water all down the right side. A par here is a golf memory for a lifetime.

The golf-house has a beautiful bar and a fully stocked pro shop, so don't forget to buy a memento of your time at Capricorn before you head back to the resort and relax with a swim in the spectacular pool complete with a waterfall and waterslide.

Capricorn Resort Yeppoon has three fantastic restaurants to choose from: Lagoon, Billabong and the famous Tsuruya Japanese restaurant.

FACT FILE

GREEN FEES: \$75 (\$110 for unlimited play). ADDRESS: Farnborough Rd, Yeppoon, Queensland 4703

CONTACT: (07) 4925 2621 WEBSITE: www.capricornresortgolf.com.au

HOW TO GET THERE: Yeppoon is a 40-minute drive northeast of Rockhampton, while Capricorn Resort is a further ten minutes' drive north via Farnborough Rd/Yeppoon-

Byfield Rd and Rydges Access Rd.

ACCOMMODATION: Capricorn Resort accommodation surrounds a large freshwater swimming pool with an adjoining beach pool. The resort boasts 113 rooms ranging from hotel-style accommodation through to suites. All rooms have a private balcony or terrace offering stunning views of the lush tropical gardens, the lagoon swimming pool or the stunning Capricorn coastline

GOLF GETAWAY PACKAGE: one night's accommodation, 18 holes with motorised buggy or a 30-minute massage per day, transfers to and from the golf-house and breakfast for \$275 in a resort room, \$295 in a superior room and \$365 in a Capricorn suite (twin-share rates). **UNLIMITED GOLF PACKAGE: one** night's accommodation, unlimited golf with motorised buggy or a 60-minute massage per day, transfers to and from the golf-house and breakfast for \$375 in a resort room, \$395 in a superior room and \$465 in a Capricorn suite (twin-share rates).

PLAY AND STAY PACKAGES:





obram Barooga Golf Club is a course that keeps players on their toes as they weave through the various hazards scattered across beautiful surrounds. The club offers the best of old and new for serious and novice golfers.

The original 18-hole 'Old' course was constructed in 1925 and is the more famous of the two 18-hole courses. At 6,186 metres, its clever design and narrow tree-lined fairways provide a good test of skill for any player. The West course offers wider fairways, larger

greens and additional slopes that provide natural framing for tee shots. At 6,287 metres, it is a slightly longer layout and blends resort golf with modern links style.

Tee-times are available seven days a week, while the clubhouse has been totally renovated with a fabulous choice of areas both indoors and outdoors to dine and relax. There's a new lounge bar with spacious decks, comfortable contemporary furniture and a welcoming country atmosphere.

The highlight of the 'new look' is the

accommodation. Eighteen new luxurious and fully-equipped units are available. The ground floor opens onto the golf course and the generous balconies of the upstairs units provide beautiful views of the course.

To complement, Barooga Sports Club is less than a kilometre away. Also on offer is the Sporties Barooga Bowls Club with synthetic greens and a modern clubhouse. At the Sporties Health & Fitness Centre, there is a 25-metre climate-controlled indoor pool, spa, aerobics room and fully equipped gym.

FACT FILE

GREEN FEES: \$40 (Saturdays and public holidays), \$35 (all other

ADDRESS: Golf Course Rd, Barooga, NSW 3644

CONTACT: (03) 5873 4304 WEBSITE: www.sporties.com.au

HOW TO GET THERE: Barooga is a three-hour drive north of Melbourne, just on the NSW side of the Murray River. The club is on the northern side of town.

ACCOMMODATION: 18 luxurious on-site rooms with golf course views.

PLAY AND STAY PACKAGE:

For \$310 per person, midweek and weekends, receive two nights' accommodation at a 41/2-star motel, two rounds of golf, two evening meal vouchers, two fully cooked breakfasts and free use of golf cart (when available; conditions apply - not available in March, April, October or November).





righlands Golf Club is nestled at the gateway to the beautiful Southern Highlands in Mittagong, on the old Hume Highway only an hour's drive from Sydney Airport. With manicured greens and fairways, this course offers a challenge to the experienced golfer as well as enjoyment for the social player or those wishing to build on their golf experience.

The course is recognised as the most improved in the Southern Highlands during recent years. Catering for visitors and

members alike, it is the friendliest club in the Highlands. Highlands Golf Club caters for social groups all year round and with the extra activities on offer in the Highlands – such as first-class wineries, bushwalks, fine dining restaurants, antique shops and more - the

Southern Highlands should be next on your destination list.

See our 'Winter Warmer' golf package with partner Peppers

Craigieburn below and book your next golf holiday today. The region has much to offer so please contact head professional Scott Martyn and he will help organise your trip and anything else you would like to do during your visit.

FACT FILE

GREEN FEES: \$27.50 weekdays, \$33 weekends and public holidays.

ADDRESS: Old Hume Highway, Mittagong, NSW 2575

CONTACT: Scott Martyn on (02) 4871 3274 or info@asapgolf.com.au

WEBSITE: www.highlandsgolfclub.com.au

HOW TO GET THERE: Highlands Golf Club is a 90-minute drive south-west of the Sydney CBD via the M5, Hume Highway and Old Hume Highway.

ACCOMMODATION: Peppers Craigieburn celebrates the leisurely life in a traditional manner, deserving of its reputation as one of the region's premier venues for leisurely escapes, conferences and events. The impressive retreat, with its Bowral hotel services and beautiful gardens, are also a popular choice with brides and grooms. Guests can play tennis all year round and after dinner at Hickory's Restaurant, retire to the billiards room with a nightcap.

PLAY AND STAY PACKAGE:

WINTER WARMER GETAWAY - Two nights' accommodation and two games of golf for two people with a cart for \$399 (available Sundays to Thursdays, from April 4 to September 2, 2016). Breakfast is included and upgrade packages are available.





ocated just five minutes from the river town of Swan Hill, Murray Downs Golf & Country Club will be sure to please you both on and off the course. Providing you with great clubhouse facilities, including a bistro and café, you won't beat the country hospitality and pleasure of playing this impressive course.

Ideal for your next group or individual golf holiday, the award-winning course - a previous winner of Victorian PGA Course of the Year and consistently voted among

the top resort courses across Australia -Murray Downs has the facilities to match its reputation. The par-72 layout is a striking contrast to the Mallee plains that surround it. With river gums in the background, the course has some great signature holes, including the 5th with a long water carry to the green, making it a challenging task for those that choose to risk it and hit straight for the green. The course does provide some relief on other holes, including the other par-3s at 11 and 15. Murray Downs is playable for all handicaps, rewarding the great shots and penalising the ones we wish we'd never hit.

The Murray Downs Bistro and Café will meet all your mealtime needs over your stay. From a quick snack in the café to dinner at the end of the day in the bistro, both have affordable meals starting at less than \$10.

Murray Downs Resort is located opposite the 16th fairway and only a short stroll from the clubhouse. You can be on the 1st tee within minutes; you won't have to touch your car keys again until it's time to head home.

FACT FILE

GREEN FEES: \$45 (seven days).

ADDRESS: Murray Downs Drive, Swan Hill, Victoria 3585

CONTACT: 1800 807 574, (03) 5033 1422 WEBSITE: www.murravdownsresort.com.au

How to get there: Swan Hill is a four to four-and-a-half-hour drive north of Melbourne via the Calder Freeway and Murray Valley Highway. ACCOMMODATION: Murray Downs Resort sits opposite the golf club and offers 50 air-conditioned family-size and two-bedroom rooms, plus 17 self-contained apartments. Also included is a heated spa, lawn tennis court, undercover barbecue facilities, conference room and more.

PLAY AND STAY PACKAGE:

On-course packages at Murray Downs Resort start from \$105 per person per night and include on-course accommodation, cooked breakfast, unlimited golf and meal vouchers to the club bistro.





tay and play at Australia's best golf resort, Noosa Springs. This pristine 18-hole championship course offers a challenging and memorable golf experience right in the heart of Noosa on Queensland's Sunshine Coast.

The stunning par-72, 6, 180-metre championship course was built to international standards and has hosted PGA qualifying events. Undulating fairways are landscaped into native bush alongside spring-fed lakes teeming with wildlife.

Our flexible, affordable stay-and-play packages are great value for the serious golfer looking for a luxury golf retreat just minutes' drive from the main tourist hub. Everything is on-site: spacious apartments, award-winning dining, aqua day spa, heated swimming pool, fitness centre, tennis courts and nature trails.

Improve your golf swing on Noosa's only practice range (floodlit Wednesday to Saturday evenings), take a lesson with our AAA-rated Australian PGA professional, Peter Heiniger, or join one of our popular social golf events.

Spacious one-and-two bedroom apartments are nestled beside the 1st fairway where you can savour the sights and sounds of nature from your private balcony. The apartments have full kitchen facilities and a laundry, making self-catering an easy option. From there it's a short stroll to the clubhouse where awardwinning Relish Restaurant dishes up delicious contemporary cuisine made from the region's freshest produce.

Finally, there are twice-daily free transfers to Hasting Street's lively cafés and boutiques.

FACT FILE

GREEN FEES: \$120 for visitors; special rates apply for in-house guests

ADDRESS: Links Drive, Noosa Heads, Queensland 4567

CONTACT: (07) 5440 3333

WEBSITE: www.noosasprings.com.au

HOW TO GET THERE: Noosa Springs at Noosa Heads is a 90-minute drive from the Brisbane CBD. It is 140 kilometres north of Brisbane airport and 30km from Sunshine Coast Airport at Maroochydore. Both airports offer direct door-to-door shuttle bus services. ACCOMMODATION: Spacious one- and two-bedroom self-contained apartments with single, twin, triple and quad-share configurations and a leafy outlook onto the 1st fairway of the golf course.

PLAY AND STAY PACKAGE:

Unlimited Golf Getaway from \$175 per person, per day, quad share. Two-night minimum stay, including full buffet breakfast daily. Play unlimited golf daily with motorised cart and enjoy access to the fitness centre and heated swimming pool. Block-out periods and terms and conditions apply.





ituated just two-and-a-half hours north of Melbourne and located on the Murray River at Echuca-Moama, Rich River Golf Club Resort is a destination offering two distinct championship courses featuring immaculately groomed and playable surfaces all year round.

Opened in 1979, the par-72 West course has hosted many professional events and we consider it a great test for all levels of ability. The West is a tight layout with tree-lined fairways and elevated greens, making scoring perhaps tougher than on the East course.

Redesigned by Peter Thompson in 1998, the par-72 East is more links-like in style and features water that comes in to play on several holes. The back nine is particularly challenging with the last five holes separating a good score from a great score if you can stay clear of the strategic water hazards and tough bunkering. The East course is currently host to the Rich River Trainee Classic, one of only two national trainee events in Australia.

We have 40 refurbished standard suites

accommodating up to four guests (maximum three adults), featuring one king split bed in the bedroom and a single bed in the lounge room. Our 22 renovated and stylish deluxe rooms can accommodate two guests and feature a queen bed and TV in the bedroom. The luxurious executive suite - perfect for a romantic escape - features a king bed and TV in the bedroom. The large bathroom has a separate area with a modern spa bath. Continental buffet breakfasts are included for all guests unless otherwise specified.

FACT FILE

GREEN FEES: \$50 (\$30 for nine holes). ADDRESS: Twenty Four Lane, Moama, NSW 2731 CONTACT: (03) 5481 3333

WEBSITE: www.richriver.com.gu

HOW TO GET THERE: Exit Melbourne via the Hume Freeway, then continue onto the Northern Highway through Kilmore, Elmore and Rochester. As you come into Echuca, make your way through the main street and over the bridge to Moama. Continue through the main street, then take a left into Perricoota Rd, travel along about four kilometres and take a right into Twenty Four Lane. ACCOMMODATION: Our 63-room complex surrounds the

manicured lush gardens that house two outdoor pools, a spa, barbecue area and children's play equipment. Adjacent to the clubhouse and surrounding golf courses, once here, you will never need to leave.

PLAY AND STAY PACKAGES:

MID-WEEK PACKAGE - from \$275 per person: includes two nights' accommodation, two days' unlimited golf, two club vouchers and two breakfast vouchers. Available Sundays to Thursdays and subject

WEEKEND PACKAGE - from \$295 per person: includes two nights' accommodation, two days' unlimited golf, two club vouchers and two breakfast vouchers. Available Fridays to Saturdays and subject to availability.

MID-YEAR PACKAGE - from \$115 per person, per night: includes one night's accommodation, a day of unlimited golf, one club voucher and a breakfast voucher. Available from June 1 to August 31, 2016, excluding the Queen's Birthday long weekend. Minimum two-night stay on weekends and subject to availability.







ocated just over an hour's drive from Sydney's CBD, Riverside Oaks Golf Resort is set on 238 hectares of natural bushland bordering the Hawkesbury River.

Riverside Oaks boasts Sydney's only 36-hole golf resort with two championship courses. Both featured in Golf Australia's Top-100 Public Access Courses ranking in 2015, while this year the Bungool course earned 54th spot in the overall ranking of Australia's Top-100 Courses.

Enjoy a weekend away in our beautiful

new resort accommodation. We offer well-appointed rooms with the option of twin-share or king bed configurations overlooking the tranquil golf course and surrounding bushland. Why not test your skills on our resort course "Gangurru" and the tournament course "Bungool"? Riverside Oaks has everything you need for a great weekend of golf all at the one resort.

The Gangurru layout is well designed for golfers of all abilities, offering a challenging, rewarding game among charming natural surrounds. Gangurru was host to the NSW PGA Championship in 2014, as well as the PGA Tour of Australasia qualifying school.

The new Bungool course, designed by the internationally renowned Bob Harrison and host of the 2015 NSW PGA, is a true 'risk and reward' course. It ebbs and flows, following the magnificent Hawkesbury River and promises an exceptional challenge for even the most seasoned and skilful golfers.

FACT FILE

GREEN FEES: \$75 (weekdays); \$99 (weekends). Green fees include cart hire.

ADDRESS: 74 O'Briens Rd, Cattai, New South Wales 2756 CONTACT: (02) 4560 3200; info@riversideoaks.com.gu

WEBSITE: www.riversideoaks.com.au

HOW TO GET THERE: Exit the M2 or M7 onto Old Windsor Rd. Turn right onto Pitt Town Rd and drive towards Wisemans Ferry for about 15 minutes. Riverside Oaks is on the left, about a 60- to 80-minute drive from the Sydney CBD. ACCOMMODATION: Riverside Oaks Golf Resort recently opened 36 exceptional and first-class resort rooms, including six executive suites.

PLAY AND STAY PACKAGE:

One night's stay in a deluxe room with full breakfast in the Brasserie, 18 holes on Bungool golf course and 18 holes on Gangurru golf course with a GPS cart for \$180 per person, twin share. Valid Monday to Friday until April 30, 2016 (excludes public holidays). The weekend rate is \$240 per person.





estled in the idyllic seaside town of the same name, South West Rocks Country Club boasts a picturesque 18-hole golf course worthy of any player. Whether you're off 4 or 24 you will enjoy the well designed and interesting layout. The course is a par-72 measuring 5,953 metres that winds its way around tree-lined fairways.

Most of the 18 holes are straightforward, however accuracy off the tee is rewarded as the treelines can make an escape to the green difficult. The course offers a good variety of

holes, for example our 15th (Fred's Hole) is a 383-metre par-4 with a water carry for your second (or third) shot. The bentgrass greens are in fantastic shape all year round, as are the fairways. It truly is a beautiful course to play.

The clubhouse offers all of the facilities you would expect, including free Wi-Fi and dining options from a quick light meal in our coffee shop to something more substantial in our award-winning Seasons Restaurant.

South West Rocks is located on the Mid North Coast of New South Wales at the mouth of the Macleay River, approximately one hour south of Coffs Harbour. The town has a wonderful seaside village atmosphere and is a very popular holiday destination, offering not only great sporting facilities but magnificent beaches and rich heritage with the Old Trial Bay Gaol set high on cliffs above the sea. South West Rocks also offers some of the best diving locations in the country.

FACT FILE

GREEN FEES: \$30.

ADDRESS: 2 Sportmans Way, South West Rocks, NSW 2431

CONTACT: Emma Ford on (02) 6566 6252 WEBSITE: www.rockscountryclub.com.au

HOW TO GET THERE: South West Rocks is a five-hour drive north of Sydney. Take the Pacific Highway north, turning off at Plummers Lane then on to South West Rocks Rd. ACCOMMODATION: The club has two accommodation partners, the Rockpool Motel and Sunshine Bia 4.

PLAY AND STAY PACKAGE:

South West Rocks Country Club offers a number of packages in conjunction with our two accommodation partners and can tailor a deal to suit any number of people, whether it be a social group or a couple on a weekend escape. If you are in a group and plan on staying for a number of days, we can also create a package that can include an afternoon of barefoot bowls and a barbecue, or a day's fishing on one of 'the Rocks' many charter boats.





he Eastern Golf Club has high-quality long- and short-game practice facilities, including a grass-tee driving range, covered practice bays with Titleist NXT range balls and a world-class TaylorMade Performance Centre equipped with Trackman and SAM PuttLab.

The Greg Norman-designed 27-hole main course has 18 holes now open, with the remaining nine plus a nine-hole par-3 private course due to be completed midyear. The layout is designed to complement all golfers and abilities with five sets of tees.

In addition to golf, there are four championship-sized tennis courts, bush walking trails, a gymnasium and two games rooms for kids and adults to enjoy. The clubhouse consists of a large private members lounge, dining room and function rooms. Yering Gorge Cottages by The Eastern Golf Club is the club's

private on-site accommodation and was voted

by our guests on Trip Advisor as the Yarra Valley's top boutique accommodation.

The self-contained cottages are luxuriously appointed with an in-room corner spa, large deck overlooking the Yarra Valley Range, Christmas Hills and the golf course, floor-to-ceiling windows, a kitchenette and cosy wood fires for those romantic nights in.

FACT FILE

GREEN FEES: \$150 manager introduced, by application only. A range of membership options are available with six-month and two-year introductory memberships starting from less than \$5 per day. Eastern is a private club usually restricted to members and invited guests.

ADDRESS: 215 Victoria Rd, Yering, Victoria 3770

CONTACT: (03) 9739 0110

WEBSITE: www.easterngolfclub.com.au

HOW TO GET THERE: The Eastern Golf Club is about an hour's drive from central Melbourne

via the M3 and Maroondah Highway.

ACCOMMODATION: Yering Gorge Cottages, with one- and two-bedroom cottages plus a four-bedroom residence, are privately located at the rear of the property within a 16-hectare precinct on the banks of the Yarra River and at the foothills of a 50-hectare nature reserve.

PLAY AND STAY PACKAGES:

Play-and-stay packages begin from \$195 per person, per night, and include accommodation, 18 holes of golf, a cart for the duration of the stay, continental breakfast basket and recreational access.





et on the northern headland of Torquay, Peppers The Sands Resort offers an 18-hole championship golf course designed by Stuart Appleby. This beachfront property spans from White's Beach to Point Impossible, and offers pristine views of the ocean and natural wetlands.

The layout features a vast array of bunkers throughout and a particularly strong back nine. The uphill par-4 11th hole is one of the toughest two-shotters around as it climbs to an angled green benched into a hillside. The

mammoth carry required from the back tee at the par-5 16th is fun to attempt even if you think you won't make it across the hazard, while several more docile teeing grounds sit further along the hole.

All air-conditioned rooms at The Sands Torquay feature a work desk and a flat-screen television. Each room also includes ironing supplies and tea/coffee-making facilities. Guests can also pamper themselves with an in-room massage, while guests 18 years of

age or older can enjoy free access to a private health club boasting an indoor lap pool and a fitness centre.

Hanners Restaurant and Bar features European and Asian fusion cuisine and serves breakfast daily (opening hours are limited over the winter period). Guests can sample a glass of local wine while savouring the views of the golf course and sand dunes. Room service is also available during restaurant hours.

FACT FILE

GREEN FEES: \$75 weekdays, \$85 weekends. ADDRESS: 2 Sands Boulevard, Torquay, Victoria 3228 CONTACT: (03) 5264 3307

WEBSITE: www.thesandstorauav.com

HOW TO GET THERE: Sands Resort is located in the Surf Coast region, 20 minutes' drive from Geelong. Guests can walk along Whites Beach to the Torquay town centre in just 25 minutes. Melbourne is an hour's drive away.

ACCOMMODATION: Available on site with both suite and studio options.

PLAY AND STAY PACKAGE:

Stay and play from \$360 for two to play golf with a cart and staying in a studio view room.





hurgoona Country Club Resort offers golfers a mature championship golf course located only ten minutes from Albury, an easy three-hour drive from Melbourne and a 60-minute flight from Sydney. Designed by Peter Thomson and Mike Wolveridge, Thurgoona presents a fair challenge to golfers of all abilities.

Beautifully covered Santa Ana couch fairways invite your approach to large bentgrass greens with subtle slopes, strategically placed bunkers and enough water to make even the

most experienced golfer think twice. The 18-hole championship course plays to 6,372 metres with a par and ACR of 72 for men and 5,480 metres, par 74 and ACR 75 for ladies.

Thurgoona is a semi-private facility offering great membership packages as well as lots of availability for visitors and stay-and-play groups. Regular competitions are held on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays with several special events throughout the year. Notable highlights include our Schweppes Classic Week of Golf, which will be held from

October 17 to 21 this year, plus the Murray Classic event in May and the Murray Masters event held in December.

Our on-course accommodation features a 26-room motel bordering the 18th fairway, a short stroll from the clubhouse, with a swimming pool, tennis courts, hot tub, sauna, gym and a full service club with bistro, TAB and several televisions to watch the game(s). For any non-golfers, our close proximity to Albury and its great selection of shops, restaurants and cafés ensures there is something for everyone.

FACT FILE

GREEN FEES: \$32 weekdays, \$36 weekends and public holidays.

ADDRESS: 1 Evesham Place, Thurgoona, NSW 2640

CONTACT: (02) 6043 1666

WEBSITE: www.thurgoongresort.com.gu

HOW TO GET THERE: Thurgoona is a suburb on the north-eastern side of Albury. Albury is a three-hour drive north-east of Melbourne or

a five- to six-hour drive south-west of Sydney.

ACCOMMODATION: The 26-room motel borders the 18th fairway and includes deluxe, family, spa and standard rooms.

PLAY AND STAY PACKAGES:

Midweek packages start from \$99 per person, twin share; weekend packages start from \$107.50 per person, twin share. Play and stay packages are available for any sized group and include one round of 18 holes for each night's accommodation, continental breakfast (with a hot breakfast option available) and a dinner voucher.





🖊 arrawonga Mulwala Golf Club Resort is Australia's largest public-access golf resort, boasting stunning surrounds alongside the majestic Murray River. It has 45 holes of some the finest golf in Australia, winning rave reviews for its inspired design of the club's three courses, their immaculate condition and the extraordinary range of play for novices, casual and championship players.

The Murray course is right beside its namesake river, and meanders through towering river gums and sandy river flats. This course favours the straight hitter, as many billabongs and lagoons are eagerly awaiting wayward balls. Its pedigree is impeccable, as it was designed by Peter Thomson and Michael Wolveridge and is ranked in the Top-100.

Named for Lake Mulwala, the Lake course overlooks this beautiful waterway. You'll find strategically placed lakes, undulating greens, 56 bunkers and lots to test keen players.

If you're a novice or are tight for time, the shorter Executive course is ideal. Set in beautiful parkland, it's more lenient

for beginners but still provides plenty of challenges for more experienced players.

Stay on-course and you're absolutely spoilt for choice. There are nine different styles of accommodation; all are family friendly and just a short stroll from the clubhouse.

Looking for more than just golf? Relax in our state-of-the-art luxury movie theatre, swim in the solar-heated pool, play tennis, work out in the fully equipped gym, pamper yourself with a massage, play barefoot bowls or croquet, or book a tour of the local Rutherglen wineries.

FACT FILE

GREEN FEES: \$48 for 18 holes, \$72 for one day's play or \$180 for five days' golf (weekdays).

ADDRESS: Golf Club Rd, Mulwala, NSW 2647

CONTACT: (03) 5744 1911; stayandplay@yarragolf.com.au

WEBSITE: www.varragolf.com.au

HOW TO GET THERE: Yarrawonga is a three-hour drive north of Melbourne via the Hume Highway and Benalla-Yarrawonga Rd. The club is also 70 minutes' drive west of Albury on the NSW/Victorian border.

ACCOMMODATION: Choose between nine different types of accommodation, from basic cabin-style to luxurious, well-appointed apartments and villas, each with cooking facilities, private bathrooms and a car parking space.

PLAY AND STAY PACKAGES:

WEEKEND EXPERIENCE: two nights' accommodation Friday and Saturday (Grevillea, Wattle or Waratah Suite), two rounds of golf and two complete breakfasts for \$288 per person (saving \$72).

THREE-NIGHT MID-WEEK EXPERIENCE: three nights' accommodation from Sunday to Thursday (Grevillea, Wattle or Waratah Suite), three rounds of golf and three complete breakfasts for \$361 per person (saving \$90). *Valid for new bookings June 1 to August 31, 2016, twin share, subject to availability. All bookings to be made via phone.





FANATICS YOUNG & O

AS THE Fanatics gear up for their tour to this year's US Masters, it may come as a surprise to discover their troops span the generations, particularly when it comes to golf.

For example, 52-year-old Bryan Phillips, who recently travelled to Korea with the Fanatics for the Presidents Cup, says he can't wait to go on tour again.

"I'll be there at Augusta in 2017 with a few of

my long-time golfing mates from the 'Doon and most of them are a much older vintage than me," he said

"The knowledge and respect the Fanatics showed is what really impressed me. Then to have the world's best players join us for photos and tell us how grateful they were for our support was something I'll always cherish."

The Fanatics run tours to the US Masters each

year with packages from US\$3,790, including Masters tickets, hotel accommodation and transfers. Their popular Golfer's Tours also take in Los Angeles and San Diego, which include rounds at the Kia Classic's Aviara Golf Resort and the Torrey Pines, host of the 2008 US Open and regular PGA Tour stop.

For more information, phone 1300 326 284 or visit www.thefanatics.com



NZ MIXED FOURSOMES FOR PRETTY WANAKA

The picturesque Wanaka Golf Club will host the New Zealand Amateur Mixed Foursomes for the second consecutive time later this year.

Managed by PaR NZ Golfing Holidays, the tournament, to be played over the New Zealand Labour Day weekend on October 22 and 23, always attracts players of all abilities from both sides of the Tasman.

In 2015, the field was split into divisions of eight pairs, competing in foursomes matchplay. Only the top division competed 'off-the-stick'; all other divisions competed in handicap foursomes matchplay.

Though sometimes in the shadow of nearby Queenstown golf beauties such as The Hills, Jack's Point and Millbrook, the Wanaka course's challenges and vistas are also very impressive.

Entry forms for the 2016 New Zealand Amateur Mixed Foursomes will be available shortly on www.nzgolf.org.nz and www.parnz. co.nz with an easy on-line registration option.

NEW 2016 RYDER CUP PACKAGES

The Sydney-based Golf Touring Company has just released two special packages to this year's Ryder Cup in the United States.

The Cup, which is one of the world's greatest sporting events, is being played at Hazeltine Golf Club near Minneapolis from September 30 to October 2. The Europeans, led by captain Darren Clarke, will be looking to make it four



wins in a row against the Americans, being captained by Davis Love III. In fact, the US team has won the Cup only twice since 1993. It promises to be an intense four days of competition and there are two ways, suiting two budgets, to get there.

The Option 'A' package includes six nights' accommodation in a private house just a walk away from the golf course. You'll get a badge to attend a practice day as well as all three days of the event. All food and beverages at the host house are included, as are airport transfers. This package costs A\$13,995 per person.

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For more information contact Stuart at The Golf Touring Company on (02) 8484 2059 or e-mail stuart@thegolftouringcompany.com.au



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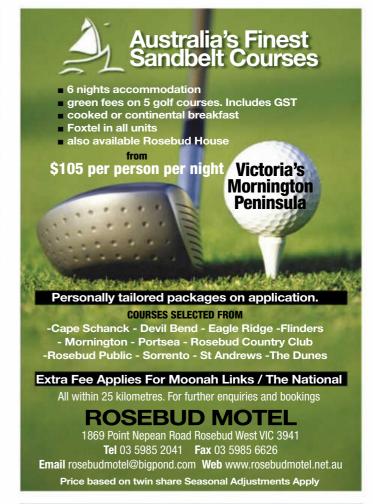
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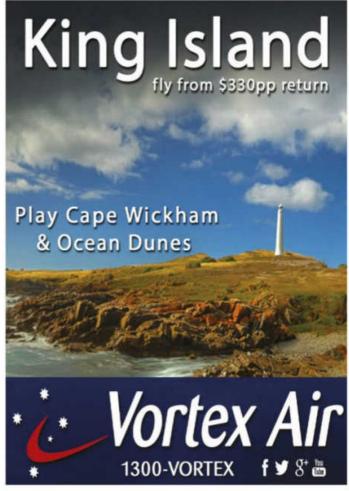
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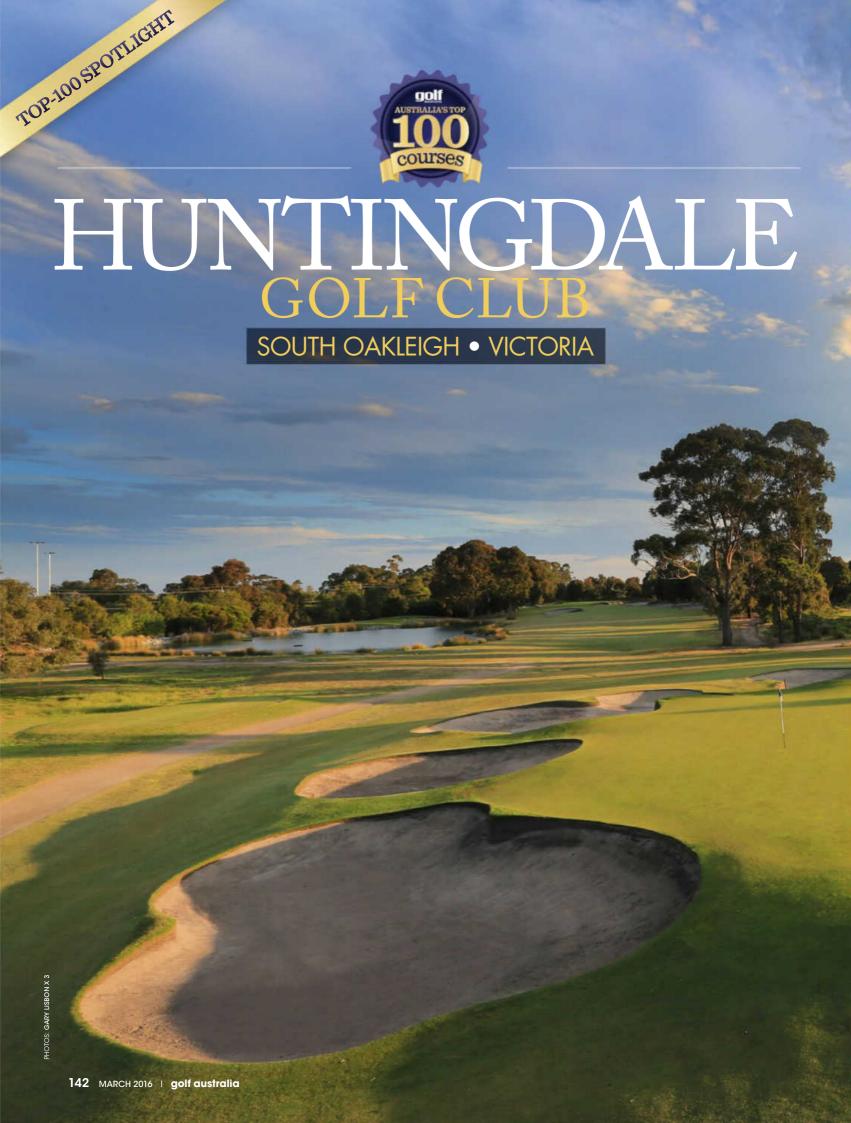


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oyal Melbourne and Kingston Heath aside, Huntingdale is arguably the most famous of Melbourne's Sandbelt courses, having been the home of the Australian Masters from 1979 to 2008, and again in 2015.

For nearly three decades, we were treated to seeing some of the best players in the game – including Greg Norman, Tiger Woods, Nick Faldo, Jack Nicklaus, Tom Watson, Bernhard Langer and Seve Ballesteros and many more – striding Huntingdale's fairways in pursuit of the Masters' gold jacket.

And, like the US Masters has done for Augusta National, it brought Huntingdale into our living rooms and we became so familiar with its lightning fast greens, tight fairways and ominous bunkers.

As a result of its Australian Masters history, there is more to a round at Huntingdale than simply pitting your skill against the course. As you make your way around the layout, memories of great Masters moments can be relived and, perhaps, emulated.

The design team of Jack Newton, Graeme Grant and John Spencer extensively remodelled Huntingdale over several years starting in the late 1990s. Some of the changes polarised opinion, despite improving the year-round playability of the course, which always suffered from poor drainage during the wetter winter months.

In recent times, British architect Martin
Hawtree has advised the club on some
changes. Among them has been the clearing
of introduced tree and scrubs species,
replaced by more than 4,000 natives that has
certainly opened up what was, at times, a
claustrophobic round of golf.

That said, Huntingdale remains one of the finest tests of accurate ball-striking to be found in this country, which was the hallmark of all the great golfers who won the gold jacket.

The round opens with two very good par-4s that both challenge you to find the 'correct' position off the tee to leave a straight-forward approach into heavily bunkered greens.





other Sandbelt courses, the larger size of Huntingdale's sandy hazards makes them more visually intimidating to players of all

The first par-3 on the back nine, the 161-metre 12th, is a bit of a sleeper hole but if there are any question marks over your ability from the sand, it can be frightening if you are nursing a good score. Played through a chute created by trees left and right, it can be difficult getting a read on the breeze, making club selection very important. The subtle undulations of the putting surface are an oasis compared with what awaits when missing the green, as there are seven bunkers surrounding the putting surface. The only 'miss' that will not result in a bunker shot

The 410-metre par-4 18th is one of the best, and most famous, closing holes in Australian golf. It was here in the 1999 Masters that a young Craig Spence, tied for the lead with Norman, rifled a 6-iron to within a metre of the hole. The resulting birdie could not be matched by Norman and Spence collected his first winner's cheque. Today, most pros only require a short iron to reach the green and are certainly not troubled by the fairway bunkers left or the cross bunker short of the huge putting surface. But for the rest of us, it is a treacherous driving hole followed by a demanding second shot to a green that doesn't cough up too many birdies, especially when you are putting from above the hole.

ADDRESS: Windsor Ave, Oakleigh South, Victoria. CONTACT: (03) 9579 4622, (03) 9570 4133 (pro shop); www.huntingdalegolf.com.au **DESIGNERS:** Charles H. Alison and Sam Berriman (1941); Jack Newton, Graeme Grant & John Spencer (1998-2010); Martin Hawtree (ongoing).

GREEN FEES: Huntingdale is a private course but limited tee-times are available for interstate and overseas visitors, who are members of a registered golf club.

GOLF AUSTRALIA MAGAZINE TOP-100 COURSES HISTORY: No.40 (2012); No.51 (2014); No.46 (2016).

RANKING JUDGE'S COMMENTS:

"The strength of Huntingdale lies in its green complexes. Recent bunkering has made the driving areas tighter and harder to choose a brave line from the tee, but once safely in the fairway the approach shots are very interesting. The green sites on 1, 2, 8, 11, 12 and 13 are some of the most interesting on the Sandbelt. They often require a shaped shot to get to a pin, but give a safe option to play to the middle of the green if you are just looking to make par. Short-siding yourself on the Huntingdale greens can be costly, so there is always a decision to be made before hitting your approach shots. This decision becomes even more engaging when the greens are playing firm and fast." - Richard Macafee (2016). "For me, the appeal of visiting Huntingdale is in walking down memory lane; of playing the holes that were the scene of so many famous moments in the history of the Australian Masters. The fairways and greens always seem in great nick. I always enjoy getting a good tee shot away on the testing 1st hole, or hitting an approach shot close on the short 2nd hole. Other holes on the back, like 10, 11, 14 and 18, are fun to play too." - Matthew Mollica (2016).













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I don't want to say it was a pure fluke [his recovery shot] because I had some idea what I was going to do. But I could not do that again in probably 100 attempts.

- Michael Long

Michael Long



WINNING SCORE: 13-under-par,

DEFEATED: Defeated Matthew Millar on the first hole of a sudden death play-off.

DEFINING MOMENTS: Long was seemingly in the driver's seat on the first play-off hole, having smashed his drive at the par-5 18th hole to be within range of the green in two shots. Millar, who was shorter off the tee, played his second safely down the fairway before Long launched his second towards the green. He pulled it well wide of the target and it finished in tall rough within the wetland area. Long thought the ball was lost but when it was located he was faced with an incredibly difficult recovery, which he played with aplomb. The miraculous escape shot finished eight feet from the flag and he went on to hole the putt and claim the victory.

WITH THIS VICTORY ...

- Long collected a winner's cheque for \$45,000
- · The 47-year-old receives a twoyear exemption on the PGA Tour of Australasia.
- His previous victory on the PGA Tour of Australasia was in the 2008 WA PGA Championship.



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